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PHILIP ROLLO.

Book the Eighth.

CHAPTER I.

A DISCOVERY.

A WEEK glided away at the quiet old castle of Nyekiöbing.

Every day the old queen rode forth on a fat Danish horse, accompanied by Ernestine and other ladies; every day, at the same hour as yesterday, the guard presented arms at the gate—the officers saluted—the drum rolled—the pipe yelled, and for the remainder of that day all became quiet again. A few ships now—but very few, for war had desolated the cities of the coast—spread their white sails on the waters of the Sound, and listlessly we watched them from the lower ramparts, where moss and grass grew under the wheels of the unused cannon. I saw Ernestine frequently, but always briefly and in presence of her father; so that no opportunity was afforded to me for addressing her as my heart wished, and as vanity and hope told me she, perhaps, expected.

As our commandant, Ian was, more than I, about the queen's little court; I envied his opportunities of enjoying the society of the two charming sisters; and I frequently saw him in the garden with Gabrielle leaning on his arm; for, though grave and somewhat thoughtful, he told me that he loved her prattle, for it reminded him of Moina. When not on duty I rarely saw the venerable widow of Frederick II., and she spoke to me seldom; but on these occasions it was invariably to make some remark on her late son-in-law, the king of Scotland, James VI., or on his

gallant retinue—the chancellor, old John of Montrose, and the three hundred Scottish nobles and cavaliers, who accompanied him to Upsala, when he espoused her daughter Anne, and when so merry a winter was spent by the whole Danish court.

From King Christian couriers came frequently, and it was evident that they bore evil tidings, which were industriously concealed from us.

One day the Count of Carlstein met me hurriedly; I observed that he had on his belt with his sword and poniard, as well as a stout corslet, which the Baron Fœyœ had given him.

“I am about to leave you, captain,” said he.

“Leave us, count—for whence?”

“The king generously gave me liberty, and, while the great game of glory and fortune is being played so well by Wallenstein, by Tilly, and Merodé, can I remain inactive here at Falster? Another column of Christian’s army has surrendered to the soldiers of the empire.”

“Another!” I reiterated, thunderstruck by the intelligence; “which?”

“That which retreated first by the Liimfiörd. Tilly overtook it, and forced every regiment successively to lay down its arms. The old corporal has sworn by our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, that ere Yule-day every inch of Danish earth shall be under the dominion of Ferdinand. Christian has fled with all his court—fled none know where, and Denmark is all but conquered! Kœningheim has sent word that Tilly expects to see me daily.”

“Can all this be true, Baron Fœyœ?” I asked the steward incredulously, as he joined us at the castle gate.

“About as true as that the Norwegian bears speak very good Danish,” he replied, twisting his yellow mustaches and looking spitefully at Carlstein.

“No doubt such tidings are very unpleasant for *you*, Herr Baron,” replied the count, with a haughty and somewhat provoking smile; “but I beg again to assure you that all laid down their arms without firing a shot—all save the Scottish battalions of Lord Nithsdale and Sir James Sinclair of Murkle, who obtained leave to march into Sweden, and join the banner of the young and gallant Gustavus Adolphus.”

"It is impossible!" said the stout baron passionately, as he stamped about in his calfskin boots; "it is impossible, and I will never believe it!"

"I had it from the best authority," said the count, still smiling; "Bandolo has been here."

"Bandolo!" I exclaimed; "I had quite forgotten that wretch."

"Well, then, he who is to Tilly what Father Joseph is to Richelieu, has been here."

"Bandolo here,—on this island of Falster?" said the baron, turning angrily to me. "Now, by the holy Dannebrog, mein Herr, your kilted sentinels must be no better than moles or blind bats!"

"A single company of soldiers cannot furnish sentinels for the whole island, Herr Baron," I replied, with some asperity; "there are here a hundred little creeks and bays where a boat may land a man unseen, and sail again. But I thought this rascal died at Heilinghafen."

"He bears a charmed life," growled Fœyce.

"The deil is aye gude to his ain, as we say at home," said the count; "but to me this rogue appears at present a very amiable and estimable character—ha! ha!"

The passionate old baron took this merriment in deep dudgeon, and retired abruptly.

"Tilly, who knows every thing," continued the count, "on learning that I was here and at liberty, sent a small skiff across the Belt for me—yonder it is afar off, floating like a seagull. At night it will be here to take me to the isle of Fehmarn, where my honour and the emperor's service require my instant presence; for Wallenstein is about to take command of the whole army, and the most brilliant conquests are expected. Ere another year is past, the Swedish rocks and Norwegian Alps shall have echoed to the trumpets of the Empire. I will gladly avail myself of the good queen's offer to leave my daughters here; for in this cold season they could not cross the Belt in an open boat, exposed to the mist by day and dew by night. However, that they may not be dependent even on a queen, I have given Ernestine five hundred doubloons, and, in case war or disaster should reach this peaceful isle, you will protect them—will you not, sir?"

“Oh! count—to the last drop of my blood will I guard them; and, if I request it, they shall never lack protection while one brave heart survives in the regiment of Strathnaver.”

“The mother of Ernestine was of Spanish Flanders; Gabrielle of France—as I have told you, but——”

“We will never forget that they are the daughters of a countryman—of a brave soldier.”

“Enough, captain; in the care of Scottish cavaliers they are safe.”

“Yes, count—doubt not that if poor Rollo is knocked on the head, that in Ian Dhu, the Lairds of Kildon or M’Coll, they will find steadfast friends.”

“Rollo!” said he, with a start and a smile, “your Highlanders call you M’Combich, and I have never heard your officers name you otherwise than Philip; *my name*,” he added, taking my hands in his, “is also Rollo!”

“Yours, count?”

“Yes, my ancestors were a branch of the Rollos of Duncruib, in Perthshire.”

“Astonishing! we all spring from the same stock.”

We shook hands, and would have made other inquiries, but there was no time.

“My *nom de guerre* is Rupert-with-the-Red-Plume,” said the count, as we walked into the castle.

“A name that all men know of, from the shores of the Baltic to the mountains of Carinthia. We have all been so familiar with it, that we never thought of inquiring whether you had another.”

“My story is a strange and a sad one; some time I may tell it to you; but not just now.”

My soul rose to my lips, and I was about to divulge the secret of my heart—to tell him how I loved Ernestine, and would strive by good works and gallant deeds to make myself worthy of her; but he left me hurriedly, and the opportunity passed, like many others which never return again.

Fear of the Danish burghers in the town made us circumspect, and at midnight I saw him embark in a small dogger manned by four or five men, who immediately put to sea, and long before

the morning sun shone upon the waters of the Baltic, which widen there between the Danish isles and Pomeranian shore, the little vessel, speeding before an eastern wind, had vanished at the horizon towards the isle of Fehmarn.

He was gone, and I had forgotten—so much had I been occupied with my own thoughts—to narrate to him that conversation between Tilly and Bandolo, which I had overheard in the bed-chamber of the former at Luneburg. Thus, though Carlstein was not ignorant of the spy's great ambition, to settle down in private life as a count of Hanover, he had no idea that the expected coronet was to be shared with his own daughter—with Ernestine; for, with all its presumption, the project seemed so mad and ridiculous, that it had never until that night made much impression on my mind.

CHAPTER II.

THE ARMS OF EXPECTATION.

ON the day after their father's departure, I saw neither Ernestine nor Gabrielle. They were no doubt discomposed by his sudden absence; but they had been so used to see him go and come again, and generally little the worse save a slash or two, that in the evening I expected to meet them in the garden adjoining the royal residence of Nyekiöbing, the spacious donjon tower of which, with its heavy battlements and grated casements, overlooked it. I was not disappointed. From the window of my apartment I saw them walking there, and hurried to meet them.

It was a beautiful autumnal evening; the low flat shore of the island was bordered by a stripe of golden sand, encircled by the glittering waves of a dark blue sea, on which the sunburnt woods of the past summer cast a long and lingering shadow. Behind the yellow beach and its shady woods of brown, the sun like a golden targe began to sink, and as it sank, a million of sparkles seemed to shoot from its descending disc; down, slowly down it went; the wavering rays shot further upward; they played upon the clouds above, and lingered long there after the sun itself had disappeared; then a deeper blue spread over the waters of the Guldborg Sound—those waters among which (as the old queen once told us) Grön Jette—or the Green Giant—shot a beautiful mermaid, whom he had pursued round Falster for seven years and a day; the woods appeared in darker outline against the lurid sky, and their crisped leaves rustled in the rising wind, as the evening deepened.

Gabrielle was looking sadly towards the sea, as if she was pondering on the path their father was pursuing; but Ernestine had seated herself, and was embroidering on the cover of a large

Roman missal, a coat of arms with gold and variously coloured thread. Poor Ernestine's ideas of catholicism were not very well defined, and consisted more in forms than belief; for nearly all that her Spanish mother had taught her in infancy, the mother of Gabrielle—a French or Belgian Protestant—had left no means untried to obliterate; but Ernestine loved to do all that she thought would please her mother who was in heaven; she loved, as she said, to consider herself “the peculiar care of the mother of God;” she read more prayers than usual in the month of May, and decorated her little altar with the lilies of Mary; but her opinions were very vague and undecided. She and Gabrielle said their prayers every night and morning together on their knees, and before a crucifix; yet Gabrielle did not consider herself a Catholic. Ernestine seemed the most devout in the queen's train when in the Lutheran church of Nyeköbing, yet she would have repelled with scorn the imputation of being a Protestant. They had both been taken frequently to task by Father d'Eydel, but his asceticism and his harangues rather terrified them; and, being almost entirely occupied by military duty and dreams of ambition, the count had permitted them both to please themselves. Ernestine had an intense love for Gabrielle, and her regard for Gabrielle's mother had only been second to that which she bore her own.

There was but one heart—one soul seemed to animate these two winning creatures.

“Herr Kombeek,” said Gabrielle, hastening to me; “you saw our father before he left this, and can tell us his last messages?”

“The most tender love to you, and that you were both to keep light hearts till his return. But you must not call me that name now, Gabrielle. Mine is the same as your father's—the same as yours, as I have just discovered—Philip Rollo.”

“Oh, that is charming!” exclaimed both the girls looking up, one with her blue eyes, and the other with her black, beaming with pleasure.

“Your father——”

“Our poor father!” said Gabrielle sadly, as the tears rose again to her eyes, and she turned towards the sea.

“He deputed me to be your guardian.”

“You!” said Gabrielle, with a sunny smile of wonder in her bright blue eyes.

“You!” added Ernestine, with a flash of astonishment in her dark orbs, which were red with weeping, although she proudly endeavoured to conceal it.

“I—there is nothing so surprising in that surely, except to myself—that I should have so great an honour, so supreme a happiness.

“A rare guardian—as if we were mere children, who could not look after ourselves!” they said, laughing.

“Besides, there is that dear old queen,” added Gabrielle.

“Nay, ladies, if the wild musketeers of Merodé, or Tilly’s savage Walloons—if some exasperated Holsteiners or discomfited Danes, paid a visit in the dark to this castle by the sea; or if the boors revolted under some popular ruffian, as they do at times, and assailed the dowager’s court, because her son the king will not make peace with an emperor, who has sworn to conquer Denmark as he has conquered Bohemia, you might find there were worse protectors than Philip Rollo and his company of kilted musketeers.”

“And your tall kinsman that wears the eagle’s-wing,” said Gabrielle, with a faint blush.

“I thank *you* for remembering me, though he in his vanity forgot me,” said Ian laughing, as he stepped forward and saluted the ladies, while Phadrig Mhor, his tall henchman, remained a few paces behind; “but harkee, Philip, here hath Phadrig Mhor just learned from a fisherman, that the king is concentrating forces in Laaland to atttack Fehmarn.”

Ernestine gazed at him anxiously.

“He will certainly recall us. Our swords will rust and our tartans become moth-eaten in this mouldy old castle. Dioul! was it to guard an old woman that we came to Denmark?”

“Are you not very happy here, Herr Major?” asked Gabrielle timidly.

“Doubtless he is, madam,” said Phadrig, who had picked up a little German in these wars; “but while we stay here, I will continue a sergeant. Dugald Mhor Mhic Alaster, Gillian M’Bane, and Dunachadh Mhor of Kilmalie, will all be mere

musketeers; while our Scots lads in Sweden and Germanie are all becoming colonels of foot and rittmasters of horse. "Huich!" he added, cutting a Highland caper, at which the girls laughed excessively; "Clanna nan Gaël an' guillan a chiele!"

"Right, Phadrig!" said Ian, with sparkling eyes, as he caught our sergeant's enthusiasm; "here's to our Highlandmen, shoulder to shoulder!" he added, drinking a handful of pure water which bubbled into a stone basin near him.

"I am weary of this place already—my sorrows be on it!" grumbled Phadrig.

"Discontented rogue!" said I; "thou wilt never be pleased, I fear. Have we not the best of Danish beef, of Rostock beer and German wine, with easy duty and dry quarters to boot?"

"Phadrig is a true Highlander," said Ian, giving his foster-brother a slap on the shoulder; "he snuffs the distant strife like the erne or gled. A true Highlander, M'Farquhar, thy sword is as ready for a foe, as thy purse for a friend. But away to our company, and in case the king summons us, look well to the hammer-stalls and collars of bandoliers; for orders may come to embark in an hour; and, if we unfurl our colours, Count Tilly must keep sure watch at Fehmarn." Phadrig retired, flinging up his bonnet as he went.

"It is to Fehmarn our father has gone," said Gabrielle, in a tremulous voice; "surely—I hope you will not go there."

"We must go where the king commands us; but fear not, lady, for your father, the count. He bears a charmed life; I could almost vow be was *geforn*, as the Germans and Walloons call it—bullet proof. But, come—I have brought some bread for you to feed the golden fish in yon old mossy basin," continued Ian, offering his hand to Gabrielle to lead her away; for he knew well that I wished to be alone with her sister, and a few days residence at Nyekiöbing had made a wonderful change in his sentiments regarding these two girls. I saw the colour mount to the fair brow of Gabrielle, and a smile of pleasure play on her rosy mouth as Ian led her away.

In the garden there was a pond or large basin, built of stone, and sunk in a thick carpet of rich moss and grass, surrounded by Gueldre rose-bushes; water filled it to the brim,

and therein a few gold fish shot to and fro, and now and then a stray frog croaked or swam among the leaves that floated on its surface.

In this garden the great beeches and tall solemn poplars stood in rows, with black branches old and gnarled. Like the castle itself, the aspect of the garden was dreary and antique, for the hand of Time had passed over every thing; but when I sat beside Ernestine, all seemed to grow beautiful and bright; the scentless roses gave forth perfume; leaves covered the trees; the still stagnant bosom of the pond became limpid and sparkling, while the old castle walls shone redly and joyously, though the last flush of the west was dying upon their broad façade.

As Ian and Gabrielle retired, I drew nearer Ernestine, and for a moment saw the blood suffuse her face and white neck as she stooped over her needle, and my thoughts were beginning to be very much perplexed, when a fortunate incident gave a sudden—I may say glorious—turn to the conversation.

“What a very remarkable coat of arms!” said I.

“They are my *arms of expectation*,” said she, looking up with a waggish smile.

“Your arms of—pardon me—but I do not understand.”

“You know that I am half a Spaniard.”

“And half a Scot,” I added, placing a hand timidly upon her left shoulder.

“Well—it is the fashion in my mother’s country to divide their shield per pale, *thus*—placing their paternal arms on the sinister side.”

“On my honour, Ernestine, you are quite a little herald!”

“And leaving the dexter *blank* for those of——”

“Who—what?”

“Their future husband—whatever Heaven shall send; and these we call our ‘arms of expectation.’”

Encouraged by her merry laugh, with a beating heart I took up a pencil which lay in her work-case, and traced upon the dexter side my own arms, three cinque foils within a border.

“Whose arms are these?” she asked, looking up with a timid expression in her eyes.

“The Rollos—they are *mine*! Oh, Ernestine!—do not be

offended ; but you are so proud, that I am positively quite afraid of you. My fathers have carried these emblems on their shields in many a battle—and by the side of Scotland's kings."

"Ah ! good heavens !—what do I see—they are the same as ours ! *argent*, three *cinque foils or*, is it ? My father has them engraved on every thing at Vienna, from his banner to his saddle-bags."

"This is very remarkable ; we may be related."

"Who can say that we are not ?" continued Ernestine with a charming smile, while every moment her colour deepened ; "my father bears an assumed name, and even we scarcely know him by any other than Rupert-with-the-Red-plume. His is a strange story ! He quarrelled with his elder brother, the lord of his family, who concluded that he was born to misfortune because his mouth was not adapted to the capacity of a certain gigantic spoon, or heirloom, which, however, I do not understand ; but to ask questions about it is sufficient to kindle his anger. He served in a Scottish ship of war as captain of arquebusses, and fought against the Spaniards and Portuguese. He was wrecked ; and, after many and strange vicissitudes, found his way into the Imperial army, and, belying the old tradition of his house, won himself a coronet, and a fame that will die only with the history of Austria. His own name, written in a character which I do not understand, is traced here on a blank leaf of this old family missal."

I had listened to her as one transfixed by her words, and now, trembling with eagerness, I turned to the leaf of the Latin missal (a thick little volume, printed on vellum by Thomas Davidsone, "Printer to the King's Majestie of Scotland,") and read a single line in the old Gaëlic letter, which will make two when translated ;—

"Helen, daughter of Iain MacAonghais, to her son Philip, on his tenth birthday, at the Tower of Craigollo."

"This is the writing of my grandmother, the daughter of John, the son of Angus of Strathdee ! She had been reared by her aunt, who was a nun in a Lowland convent, and, after the storm of the Reformation, had retired to her father's house, where

she dwelt in the strictest seclusion, and practising every austerity and rule of her order, had reached a wondrous age, and, outliving all her contemporaries, died only a short time before my embarkation for Denmark. The Count of Carlstein is my long missing uncle, Philip—Oh, Ernestine, I am your cousin ! ”

I exclaimed all this with one breath ; threw an arm around her, and kissed her forehead. A sudden light—a gleam of pleasure and astonishment—flashed in the eyes of Ernestine.

“ My cousin ! —you—are we cousins ? Oh, it is impossible ! ”

“ You are my dear cousin. Oh, Ernestine ! my sweet little heart, how I shall love you ! ”

“ Good Heaven—how strange ! In one day I lose my father and find a kinsman ! ”

“ Now, have I not a right to be your guardian—and Ian, too ? And Gabrielle—oh, I must kiss that little fairy ! Ian—Ian ! Hallo ! ” I exclaimed, throwing my bonnet into the air ; “ M’Farquhar—come hither—we are all cousins ! ”

“ It is a miracle ! ” said Ernestine.

“ Believe me, dear Ernestine,” said I, tenderly ; “ love works more miracles than all the saints in your Roman calendar.”

CHAPTER III.

THE ROSE LEAVES.

THIS discovery was of great importance to me. It gave me a decided interest in the eyes of Ernestine; it afforded me, also, a decided right to be her guardian; and I felt that, with confidence, I could now state my hopes to the count—and to herself—for I was her kinsman, and, save Ian and her father, the only one she possessed in Germany or Denmark.

The long explanatory conversations Ian and I had with Ernestine and Gabrielle, afforded us the best opportunity for the most charming intimacy; and I was frequently amused when Ian, with true Celtic enthusiasm and pride, and moreover with very perplexing accuracy, traced for them their pedigree on his fingers; shewing how they were descended from Aonghais Dhu of the Clan Ivor, an irritable individual who was slain in a *cearnach* with the Clan Laiwe; leaving by a daughter of the Clan Chai, a son, Alaster Mhor Mhic Aonghais, who, with his six brothers, closed a turbulent life at the battle of Druim-na'-Coub; leaving a son, Duncan Mhic Alaster Mhor, Mhic Aonghais, by his wife, a daughter of M'Gillichattan Mhor, who had carried a foray once to the Clachnacuddan of Inverness, where he departed this life, in the good old Highland fashion, with a yard of cold iron in his body; and so on would Ian run for twenty generations, the patronymics increasing with each, until, among the barbarous names and guttural sobriquets, the sisters became lost in surprise. Like every Highlander, Ian carried about in his own memory the pedigree of his ancestry up to the times of King Donald VI., and further back perhaps; and, if Ian's memory failed him, the memory—or perhaps invention—of his sergeant and foster-brother, never did; and so they

would sit and trace back their progenitors until they became lost in the dark ages of Highland antiquity.

Ernestine heard all this mighty muster-roll with quiet astonishment, but Gabrielle with evident pleasure. She liked the society of Ian, in whom she discovered some resemblance to her father; and admired his blunt decisive manner, and that gallant and authoritative air which declared him the Celtic chief of a long descended line of free and roving warriors.

A few evenings after the discovery so fortunately made by means of that blessed old missal, we were seated near the same place, and Ernestine was feeding the golden fish with crumbs from her white hands, while Ian, Gabrielle, and the old Baron Fœyœ, were promenading on a terrace, where four brass cannon faced the Guldborg Sound. Again the sun was setting; its orb, glowing through the softening haze which floated over the woodlands of the isle, seemed to rest at the horizon; and again its fiery rays played on the glistening leaves of the tall poplars, that overtopped the old garden wall.

I was conversing with Ernestine, and thinking, as I hung over her, that I had never seen a more winning face, or graceful contour of head and neck; there was something antique and Roman in their beauty which made her seem divine, when viewed through that bright medium by which a lover sees every thing that appertains to his mistress. Since the discovery of our relationship our intimacy had greatly increased, and I had prevailed on her to accept from me a number of those pretty trifles which the taste and attention of men have invented to please and flatter women. My means for procuring these at the small Danish town of Nyeköbing were very limited, and on the day in question I had just invested my last rixdollars* on the purchase of a ring, which, after some hesitation, she accepted.

“It is very beautiful!” said she, smiling, as she placed it on a tiny finger of her dimpled hand; “and I will take it from you—as my cousin.”

“Will you not receive it from me, dear Ernestine, as one who would fain be something more?”

“It is charming,” she added, wholly occupied with her new

* A rixdollar was worth about forty shillings Scots.

ring; "and the manner in which you bestow a gift trebles its value. How I do wish, cousin Philip, that we had discovered our relationship before my father left us for the isle of Fehmarn!"

"I wish we had, dear Ernestine; for much anxiety would then have been spared me. Ere this, I would have known—my—my fate, perhaps."

"Philip—fate!"

"Ernestine, listen to me. You do not love the Count of Kœningheim—he whom your father has chosen?"

"Oh, no! poor Kœningheim. Though merry and lively at times, he is subject to the most frightful fits of sorrow and depression, as if some terrible and untellable secret preyed upon his soul. Besides, with all his assumed air of gallantry, he has in reality an aversion to women."

"An aversion!"

"At times unconquerable, when his *dark hour*, as he calls it, is upon him. Would you have thought this?"

"Never; and scarcely would I have believed it from other lips than yours."

"Love Kœningheim!" she continued; "oh, no!—I can love no one but my father and little Gabrielle—and you, for you have been so kind to her and to me."

"Thank you, Ernestine; my heart would have burst if you had omitted me in that small circle. Ah! if you knew—if you only knew—"

"What?" said she, timidly glancing at me.

"How fondly I love you, dear Ernestine! There, now, it is said—my secret is out. Will you pardon it—can you love me in return?"

After many a long and painful pause, which pen and paper cannot shew, the secret had burst from me; but Ernestine, who, with all her artlessness, expected some such avowal, made no reply, and continued to pluck the leaves of a Gueldre rose.

"You know not—you never can know, how deep this passion is, how long it has endured—since first we met at Luneburg, Ernestine!"

Leaf by leaf she still plucked on.

“ Ernestine, dearest—do you hear me ? that I love you. Oh ! you know not how fondly—how well !”

The leaves still floated away on the wind.

I felt that the citadel was about to capitulate ; that she trembled, for my hands had ventured to touch, and then encircle her waist. My whole heart seemed to vibrate.

“ Ernestine—my own Ernestine !”

The last leaf fell to the ground.

She was pale as death, and her very eyelids were trembling ; for in her breast love struggled with her provoking pride, but the plump little god soon bore all before him bravely.

I pressed my lips to her cheek, and felt assured that she—this proud and beautiful girl—was indeed mine, and that she loved me.

Between the high and the closely-clipped hedges of the old garden, we heard footsteps, as Ian and Gabrielle returned to us. I had quite forgot them, and so had Ernestine ; but now she started away in confusion.

“ I am going,” said she ; “ I must go.”

“ And shall I not see you again to-night ?”

“ No ; but a-good-night, dear Philip, and pleasant dreams to you,” she added, in the old German fashion.

“ Dear Ernestine, good-night then, and a thousand blessings attend you ; for you have taken a load of my heart, and made me indeed most happy !”

We separated, and, anxious to avoid the intruders, and to muse alone for a time, I sprang over the terrace, where the brass culverins peered through the faded honeysuckle, and from thence I descended to the calm still shore of the Guldborg Sound.

CHAPTER IV.

WINTER QUARTERS—THE SECRET OF GABRIELLE.

TIME rolled away ; we did not, as Ian expected, go to Fehmarn. Winter stole on, and one day of snow was succeeded by another. The queen and court rode out in sledges, or on horses shod with jagged shoes ; our soldiers vegetated like the weeds on the ramparts. The old queen told us endless stories of James VI. and of her daughter's marriage, and went regularly every Sunday to the church of Nyekiöbing, where worship was celebrated after the Lutheran fashion. There was a fine organ. After service, the preacher was wont to come out of the pulpit and enter the choir, where he muttered a prayer, after the fashion of a low mass, which used to make Lieutenant Lumsdaine, who was a stanch Presbyterian, twirl his mustaches, and own (though he thought the organ infinitely preferable to the bagpipe then used in his parish kirk of Invergellie) that Lutheranism, as practised in Denmark, was another name for Catholicism. After service, the queen usually rode back in state, seated upon a pillion behind the Baron Fcyeœ.

In the evenings we had a little ball, and danced to the flute and tabor, or, at times, to the great war-pipe of Torquil Gorm, which shook the dust from the rafters of the hall. At times, the old queen told us legends of the Trolds, or of the imps that haunted the ancient church of Nyekiöbing.

Like every old building in the Danish isles, it had a *nis* (or brownie) attached to it. This spirit kept the seats clean and swept the aisles, arranged the cushions and dusted the pulpit. He was seldom seen at these duties, but was known to wear a green dress and conical red hat, which on the feast of St. Michael he regularly exchanged for a broad Spanish beaver, which overshadowed the whole of his squat figure. He was called the *kirkegrim*,

and for his use a basin of groute was deposited every night in the vestry, by the wife of the beadle. Once this was omitted, and the spirit, in revenge, turned all her holiday garments into clouted rags. King Waldemar, the wild huntsman, was another source of many a legend, to which all the old queen's listeners gave implicit faith.

"Every night he rides across Laaland at this season," the queen would say, "and sweeps over the Möens-klint."

"I, myself, have heard him approaching," the Baron Fœyœ would add in corroboration; "once on St. John's night, when crossing the rocky ridges of the Möens-klint, I heard on the midnight wind a shouting and winding of horns, the barking of dogs, and the rushing sound of a mighty wind, coming up as from the waters of the Grön-sünd."

"And you knew the approach of Waldemar," said the old queen, all attention, as we drew our chairs closer round the glowing hearth—"of the wild huntsman?"

"My heart seemed frozen within me, and when the spirit passed before me, as the book of Job saith, 'the hair of my flesh stood up.' A storm of wind swept over the dark ridges of the Möens-klint, there was a gleam of lightning, and in the passing flash I saw the coal-black hounds of Waldemar, with long red tongues hanging out of their foam-covered mouths, as they ran snuffing and questing among the grass."

"And what aspect had Waldemar?" asked twenty voices in whispers.

"The aspect of a gigantic shadow, brandishing a hunting-sword; and his horse was but a shadow, for the stars shone through them both as they swept into the hollow, and I heard the clatter of farm-gates, the crackle of roofs, and the crash of chimneys, as the infernal train sped over Klintholun and vanished in the distance."

Told by the winter fire, while the night wind rumbled hollowly in the vast tunnelled chimney of the old castle hall, some of these wild legends were more impressive than any relation of mine can make them.

My company lay in winter quarters at the fort of Nyekiöbing for four months, during a most severe winter, in which (after

having had the extremity of summer heat) we had to endure the extremity of cold. Over our cuirasses we wore doublets of fur or sheepskin, and my soldiers of course retained their tartan kilts, to the astonishment of the Danes, who were ignorant of the actual warmth and comfort of the Scottish garb; for one accustomed to it, feels less cold in his knees than other men do in their faces. The Guldborg Sound was frozen over; even the Baltic was clothed with ice, which stood, as it seemed, in silent waves, and covered by long accumulated snow. All the adjacent isles, Möen, Nyord, and Bogöe, were covered with the same white mantle, and we travelled between them on sledges; but the cold was so much more severe than even the most hardy of our men were accustomed to, that I am sure they spent nearly all their pay in potent corn brandy.

All the courtiers were muffled to their noses in Russian sables; for though in summer they rather loved the French fashions, they were compelled in winter to resume the well-furred and more picturesque costume of the Danish isles.

Unmarked by any event, save the half-pagan festivities at Yule-tide, the four months glided pleasantly and joyously away; for a day never passed without some hours of it being spent in the society of Ernestine, and the more I knew of her, the more did I love her, for in her manner there was so much that was winning and charming. There was a piquant raciness and vivacity in her mode of expression that were very attractive, though her occasional bursts of pride and temper were a little perplexing; but the graces of mind I discovered in Ernestine, gave me cause to rejoice in the hour that I first became known to her. When I looked back to that moonlight night by the northern shore of the Elbe, where first I met the count near the gates of Glückstadt, conducting to him the little spy Prudentia, and where I received from him the gold chain to which so singular an interest attached, as having been the communion cup of Knox and Calvin, it seemed remarkable that now I should be so intimate with his daughters—the received lover of one—the acknowledged relation of both.

One can "make love" more readily, I think, in a foreign language than in ours. Every other tongue, even the Lowland

Scottish, the Gaelic and the Irish, teem with expressions of tenderness which the English language does not possess. Consequently the phrase, "How much I love you," could easily be said in German to Ernestine, or, in the language of her Spanish mother; it did not sound nearly so tremendous as in plain English.

Gabrielle was the only alloy to our happiness; she pined, became low-spirited, and longed incessantly to return to Vienna or to Luneburg—to see her father—to leave at least Nyeköbing; and as the winter wore away, and spring drew near, this morbid melancholy increased. We thought the dreary view of the snow-clad isles and frozen sea, the leafless woods and black pine forests, rendered her spirits low and dulled her old vivacity; or that perhaps it was the grim castle, which certes was dreary enough, for it had served many generations of the house of Oldenburg—generations who had passed away like the casual inmates of an hostel, without their names being remembered in the place of their abode. The winter winds sighed through the doors, and waved the heavy tapestries, which depicted the loves of King Waldemar and *Torve Lille*, the little lady of the enchanted ring; while the melancholy cries of the horned owl were heard incessantly from the turrets of the weatherbeaten keep.

"I am not surprised that Gabrielle finds this old castle dull," said I one day to Ernestine; "but, for your presence here, I should have found it dreary enough too."

I observed that, whenever I spoke of Gabrielle's melancholy, the cheek of Ernestine reddened, and she changed the subject with an abruptness that evinced there was some secret in it; but what that secret was I could not divine.

Yule-tide passed; on Christmas-eve the queen ordered all the gates and doors to be thrown open, that there might remain nothing to obstruct the stormy career of the wild huntsman, if he came that way—but Waldemar never came.

The months of snow glided on, and the spring of 1628 approached; but in that solitary Danish isle we heard little of the war which the valiant and unfortunate king was fruitlessly maintaining by outfalls, boat excursions, sudden landings on the coast of Holstein and Juteland, and as sudden embarkations;

always with severe loss to the small but brave force of Scottish and French infantry, which yet adhered to his desperate fortunes.

Vegetating at Nyekiöbing, we almost forgot that we were soldiers. Ian was so impatient to be gone, that he frequently vowed he would make an offer of his sword to Gustavus Adolphus, whose army was almost entirely led by Scottish officers, whom peace with England had compelled to court the smiles of fortune in a foreign camp, where many of them had risen to the rank of nobles; such as Spence of that Ilk, who became Count of Orcholm; Douglas of Whittingham, who became Count of Schonengen; while the Laird of Dalserf and many others rose to be barons of Sweden and Finland.

The charming society of Ernestine had somewhat tempered in me, perhaps, that restless craving for glory and adventure which animates a true soldier of fortune. Thus I was perfectly content, and the winter months were passed in quiet happiness; for she had promised to unite her fortunes with mine when the war ceased, and her father's consent was obtained. When the war ceased! That, indeed, would have tried the patience of honest Job, for the great *Thirty Years' war* was only then in its infancy.

The poor old queen-dowager was so kind and good, so affable and motherly, and bore her diminished fortune with such philosophical equanimity of temper, that it was impossible not to love and respect her; but she prosed sometimes, and inflicted upon us interminable stories of Holger Danske, King Waldemar, and Lille Torve, and repeated the profound sayings of that pedantic blockhead, her son-in-law, the King of Scotland.*

During my residence at Nyekiöbing, I discovered why King Christian, the patron of poetry and the drama, employed so many Scots, Irish, German, and French soldiers of fortune to fight his battles; for, unlike the Holsteiners, the majority of his subjects had really lost much of their ancient bravery, and, being somewhat addicted to cheating, were, as usual with the false, full of mistrust of others. In short, they loved not to wage war,

* The pen has been drawn through this in the original. In 1694, Lord Molesworth gave an account of Denmark similar to that which follows. It proved so offensive to the Danes, that their king demanded, by his ambassador, the author's head, from King William of Orange.

while they could get so many gallant Scots and Irishmen to wage it for them ; but, oppressed by its consequences, poverty and poor fare were every where apparent. The slavish boors fed on roots, rye-bread, and salted fish ; the burghers or citizens on lean flesh, stock-fish, bacon, and bad cheese. When the land is sold, the men, their wives and children who inhabit it, go with the freehold, like the trees and walls thereon. Their songs bore a strong resemblance to the old ballads sung by our Border harpers ; and I have no doubt that many of those ancient lays which the Goths brought out of the East, and which Tacitus mentions in his account of the Germans, might be traced among our Scottish hills, where the wandering bards of other times have brought them from Denmark.

I found them great vaunters, too, those Danes. It was their frequent boast that they were the conquerors of England, and this is graven on the tombs of many of their kings. Thus at Roskilde, on the graves of Harold VII., of Sueno III., and others, they are always designated *Rex Daciae, Angliae et Norvegiae*. Being Scots, we could not quarrel with these assumptions, as they did not concern us ; the Baron Fœyce in particular, when the schnaps or corn brandy were more potent than usual, was a vehement upholder of the ancient Danish glory, of which Ian was always somewhat sceptical.

“ I assure you it is a fact, Herr Rollo,” the baron would say, counting on his fingers ; “ we have defeated the Swedes in twenty-two pitched battles, and made them swear allegiance to four-and-twenty of our kings. We have overthrown the Norsemen in thirty-two battles. Russia has paid tribute to eight of our monarchs ; we have conquered Ireland eight, and England ten times. Canute IV. conquered Livonia, and Helgo won Saxony by his sword ; while Courland, Esthonia, and Prussia, have all, at various times, belonged to the Danish crown.”

“ Thank God, and the stout hearts of our fathers, these conquering Danes never found aught but their graves on Scottish ground ! ” Ian would retort with a grim look ; “ and you may see them yet, Herr Baron, on the battle-fields of Crail, Cru-dane, and Luncarty ; but I marvel much that the descendants of these enterprising rovers, are unable to hold yonder poor peninsula

of Juteland against the soldiers of Wallenstein, Tilly, and Merodé."

From our dreamy mode of passing the time, we were roused to our active military labours by the opening spring; and, from leading the quiet life of a very Dutchman, I was soon to become immersed in a succession of the most stirring incidents.

The season was that which at home in Britain we call spring; but in those northern isles of Denmark the snow lay thick upon the land, and with its dreary sheets the white field-ice covered all the Baltic and the Guldborg Sound; for that infallible authority who exists every where, the oldest inhabitant of Nye-kiöbing, could not remember a season so cold or so severe. From my windows, which overlooked the Sound on one side, and the castle garden on the other, the view was intensely desolate and dreary.

The fortress was very old, and my chamber was hung with faded tapestry, representing the martyrdom of Erik Plogpenning, and his ghastly body gashed with fifty-six wounds; my bed was an immense antique four-poster of the most alarming dimensions, old perhaps as the days of Holger Danske, and completely shrouded by curtains of sombre blue velvet. A tall wardrobe and cabinet of walnut wood, a table and two chairs of oak, all curiously and somewhat barbarously carved, made up the furniture; while the stone fireplace was so capacious, that within it I could stand upright with my bonnet on. And so thick were the walls, that even at noonday, but a dim light straggled through the strongly barred and deeply embayed windows.

A mound—doubtless the barrow in which reposed the bones of some bold Cimbric warrior—lay under the castle wall. Therein, as the Baron Fœyœ told me, dwelt a vast number of little Trolds, all clad in green dresses, with heavy ungainly persons, long noses, crooked backs, and red caps. He averred having seen them at a festival on St John's night; when the mound opened, its womb seemed full of light, and there, around a dead man's skeleton, were the little Trolds seen dancing, drinking fairy wine out of limpet shells, and keeping in thrall the wife of Heinrich Vüg (the Royal gateward), whom they had spirited away, and who had not the power to return to her spouse; though he frequently

heard her wailing, when, in the calm summer evenings, he sat on the summit of the mound, smoking his long pipe, and reflecting that, all things considered, his bereavement was not so hard that it could not be borne patiently.

One evening in March, when the snow lay deep around the castle, and, except the woods of leafless beech, or here and there a clump of dark green pine, every thing was mantled over with it; I sat at one of my windows, which I had opened to see more clearly the prospect of the Sound, where many a ship lay frozen in, with her high poop and snow-mantled yards casting a long shadow on the expanse of ice.

I was buried in reverie; my mind was endeavouring to pierce the clouds that rested on the future; for though the progress of my love affair was indeed most fortunate, the chances of a happy conclusion were, as yet, distant and vague; and, of all things in this world, there is nothing I dislike more than suspense.

The sun was setting, and its cold yellow lustre fell upon a stone terrace immediately below my window; there, in a sheltered place, and well muffled up in dresses of warm red cloth, trimmed with ample furs of Muscovite sable, Ernestine sat with Gabrielle, conversing in low and earnest tones. They had been there for a considerable time, before a sudden exclamation of the first made me aware of their vicinity. I had not the least intention of listening, for I had too keen a sense of honour to do so, though we have known it to be the favourite resort of romancers and players, to make even their best bred cavaliers acquainted with what it was never intended they should know; but a burst of surprise and anguish from Ernestine, and its tenor, chained me to the spot, and, think of it what you will, I was compelled to remain and listen.

“Gabrielle! oh, Gabrielle! what is this you tell me? I will leave this place at all risks—we must—we shall! Nay, nay! talk not of danger or of difficulty; for we will launch a boat and put forth together, rather than expose you to this humiliating—this miserable infatuation!”

“Oh, spare me, dear sister!” urged the plaintive voice of Gabrielle.

“I do not reproach you, Gabrielle!” said Ernestine, affection-

ately drawing her sister's drooping head upon her breast, and embracing it with her arm.

"Ernestine, is it a sin to love?"

"Not as your spotless heart loves!" replied the elder sister, kissing her; while a bright smile of affection sparkled in her mild dark eyes.

"It must be—else whence this sense of mingled shame and mortification?"

"We shall leave this ill-omened island, Gabrielle. We must depart for Vienna—I have still money enough; but oh, what a distance to travel alone! Surely, we shall find some safe conductor, at least, to the opposite shore, where the Imperialists have garrisoned every town. At all risks, my poor little dove, I will free you from this danger; so dry your tears, Gabrielle, and weep no more."

But Gabrielle's tears fell faster.

"Oh, Ernestine! I should die of shame if I thought that any one save you had heard this avowal—this humiliating avowal—or knew my terrible secret!"

"That you love a heedless cavalier—ha, ha, Gabrielle!"

"Do not laugh. I would to Heaven, Ernestine, that I had never met this man—that we had remained at Luneburg, as our dear father wished. And his Moina—how he loves her! He often praises her to me, and without perceiving that every word is like a death stab. Happy Moina!"

Moina! I was thunderstruck. The gentle, the pining Gabrielle loved Ian Dhu, whose chivalric heart was faithfully devoted to another. This was the source of that secret sadness which had so much astonished and alarmed us. Innocent and guileless, her heart had guarded in its pure recesses this deep love, which sprang from a gratitude to her father's brave preserver. Sincerely I pitied Gabrielle, for I knew that her love was hopeless; and a thousand little expressions of eye, changes of voice and manner, which, in my pre-occupation with Ernestine, had passed unobserved at the time, now flashed upon my memory. Dear Gabrielle! I loved her like a younger sister, and felt alike hostile and indignant at this unknown Moina, who had rendered Ian so invulnerable to her many attractions.

" Ian will go home to his own mountains—those blue mountains he talks so much of; and he will marry—yes, Ernestine," continued Gabrielle, " he will marry this Moina. He cannot love me. Oh! I fear he would rather despise me if he knew how much I loved him."

" Despise!—you, the Count of Carlstein's daughter!" said her sister, whose eyes kindled.

" He saved our dear father's life," said Gabrielle, with a sad smile; " 'twas that which first opened my heart unto him. He will marry that woman—and never have one thought for me, who love him so well; my memory will pass away like the last year's leaves. I hope she is good and beautiful—for he deserves a bride who is both. Yes—yes, dear Ernestine—let us leave this place; for I long for another still more solitary, where, unseen, I may give myself up to grief, and die."

" I have met men at Vienna who did not believe that a woman could love, my poor little lamb, Gabrielle!"

" Not love? How little they knew us! And who were they?"

" Wallenstein, the Duke of Friedland, was one—the Count Merodé another."

" Merodé—ah, frightful!" said Gabrielle with a shudder. " What could he know of love?"

" It was once said that he loved you, and that your rejection drove him to those excesses which have made him and his regiment a European proverb."

" He—the wretched libertine—who is said to have three wives shut up at his castle in the Black Forest of Thuringia! He—a horror to his own kinsman as to his enemies! How could you speak of him, Ernestine? oh, how unlike *him* whose image, as if by fascination, fills up my whole mind. Sister, I admire, not alone his handsome figure or fine military eye; but his bold and manly spirit, his free and gallant bearing. When we return to Vienna, I will go to a convent, sister; I think I have the vocation of which you once used to speak. It has left you, and come to me. My heart swells with pride when I see him, Ernestine. How his tall eagle's-plume overtops all others here! (I am sure I have got the vocation, sister.) He jests and laughs so

kindly, and I jest in return, to hide the deadly secret that preys upon my spirit; for until she is beloved a woman cannot love. Oh, Ernestine—Ernestine! do not think me mad or immodest; but kiss me, dear sister, for I assure you I am neither; I am still your dear little sister—the same Gabrielle. How happy you must be to have some one who loves you! There are times when jestingly he kisses my hand because we are cousins; and, as his kinswoman, in his brave heart he loves me like a little sister. But, oh! he knows not the swell of passion excited by his voice, by his approach, by his touch, and how the kiss he prints in play upon my hand sinks into my inmost heart, and makes it tremulous with joy. But he passes away to others, and then the darkness, the gloom, and desolation again sink over me."

"It is an infatuation!"

"Kiss me, Ernestine—for you have been a mother to me since my poor mother died. Kiss me, dear sister, for I am indeed very miserable!"

It seemed as if the lofty spirit of Ernestine was stung by the strange avowal of poor Gabrielle, and she wept with her; but her tears were those of pride and mortification.

Lovers never dream that others can discern their passion; and thin though the disguise may be that usually veils it, so admirably had Gabrielle concealed her secret thoughts, that none could have suspected them, and honest Ian least of all.

Time rolled on, and the month of March was passing away.

Daily I could perceive how the secret I had heard was preying upon the mind of Gabrielle, and blanching her thin, wan cheek. She lived without hope—without a future to look forward to; and when Ian spoke with joy of his return home at the close of the war (now soon expected by a treaty of which a whisper reached us), I saw that his thoughtless words sunk like iron into the poor girl's soul.

She gradually subsided into a calm but profound state of melancholy, and begged to be removed from Nyekiöbing, that she might enter a German convent; but the sea around us was yet closed by the frozen waves of the field-ice. Ernestine and I could alone see into the depths of her heart; and even Ernestine knew not that I had overheard their secret.

As for Ian Dhu, I thought he was blind not to perceive, when he approached Gabrielle, how her blue eyes sparkled, how her fair cheek flushed, and then waxed deadly pale, while her voice trembled when she answered him; but about the middle of the month a courier came from the king requiring his presence at Assens, and he left us by the port of Skielbye, where the ice had partly left an open passage between the floes.

Ernestine was pleased to see him depart; but after that event the mild eyes of Gabrielle became more sad, and her cheek more blanched. Deep thoughts preyed like deathly weariness or an incurable sorrow upon her soul. It was the “worm in the bud.”

Poor Gabrielle!—like a young flower deprived of sunshine and air, was withering away; and I feared the unhappy girl would die—though people never die of love.

But a crisis was at hand.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOGGER.

By the end of March a great and unexpected change came over the weather. The wind, which had long blown from the chill north, now came softly and mildly from the west, but still the atmosphere was cold; for though the vast field-ice floated away from the Guldborg sound, and the dark blue water rolled freely between the isles, their shores were covered with a pure white mantle of deep and dazzling snow.

Hearing that an expedition led by Christian IV. was about to be made against the Imperialists, and that a king's ship had been seen off the coast, I rode one day beyond Skielbye towards the mouth of the Sound, to see her, as I looked anxiously for the return of Ian.

On leaving Ernestine, I thought she seemed more sad than usual, and that her voice trembled when I bade her adieu. This might all have been fancy; but I could not expel such fancies from my head, and again and again they recurred to me, as I spurred a stout Holstein troop-horse (which Baron Fœyœ had lent me) along the frozen beach.

I waited long at a small house near the seashore, watching a little dogger beating with her two sails to seaward against a head wind, and threading a devious passage between the fragments of ice that flecked the sea with white; and in the evening I had the satisfaction of seeing a large king's ship, with her white sails shining in the setting sun, and her decks evidently crowded by soldiers, standing up the bosom of the narrow Sound.

I remounted my trooper, which I received from a cottager, who was remarkably polite for a Danish boor, and who informed me that he was half a Scot, as his father had come over with Captain Michael Wemyss' Scottish band in the preceding cen-

tury, to serve in the old Swedish war. But the peasants were frequently very insolent to us, as foreign soldiers; on many occasions our men had been maltreated, and in two instances our officers had been murdered. For these pranks we usually made the people pay dearly, by sending the slain man's nearest kinsmen under a sergeant to the immediate locality, where, if they failed to find and shoot the perpetrators, they burned the houses, and houghed the cattle by a gash of the skene-dhu, in the old Highland fashion.

On this evening I was involved in one of those quarrels, when returning through a village at the entrance of which the bailiff of Laaland had established a toll, for some reason best known to his worship. In consequence of the dilapidated condition of King Christian's exchequer, we had been without pay for three months; thus I was without a coin to satisfy the gateward, who peremptorily demanded a Danish fourpenny piece (twelve of which make a rixdollar), and deliberately barred my progress with a halbert.

In vain did I tell this churlish boor that I was travelling on the king's service (which by the by was not quite the case), others sallied out from the adjacent houses variously armed; and it was evident that, unless I chose to share the fate of poor Ensign Ludovick Lamond, who had lately been cut to pieces by the boors at Rodbye, there was no time to be lost. Drawing my claymore, and putting spurs to my horse, I hewed the fellow's halbert in two by one blow, hurled him to the earth, and passed the toll-gate, narrowly escaping the discharge of five or six pistolettes which were fired at that moment from behind an ever-green hedge; the leaves of which were scattered about me by the bullets.

Intent on avenging this outrage, I galloped back to the castle of Nyekiöbing; but soon found that fate had prepared other work for me.

By that time the king's ship had just come to anchor abreast of the town; a boat which shot off her side had just reached the landing-place; an officer of Highlanders sprang upon the mole, and I recognised the outspread eagle's pinion of Ian's helmet, even before he approached me.

With two thousand five hundred musketeers and pikemen, the wreck of his army, King Christian required us to repair to Rödby, whither he had commanded the scattered companies of the regiment to muster under Ian Dhu, our lieutenant-colonel; and as the rash prince was about to make a bold attack upon the cantonments of some of Wallenstein and Tilly's now united and mighty host, which occupied all the promontory of North and South Jutland, from the banks of the Elbe to the Skagen cape, my company was to embark without an hour's delay on board the *Anna Catharina*, the ship of Sir Nickelas Valdemar, who had already received the companies of Angus Roy M'Alpine, Munro of Culraigie, and Sir Patrick Mackay, from Maribœ, in the centre of Laaland, and all the little detachments of ours which occupied the castles of the isles.

“Alas, for Ernestine!” thought I, when hurrying back to the castle of Nyeköbing; “how joyous to me would these tidings once have been!”

I met one of her attendants (Juliane Viig, the warden's daughter), and desired her to inform Lady Ernestine that I craved a moment's interview, to bid a long farewell.

The girl went to her apartments, and returned to me almost immediately, with an expression of astonishment and consternation impressed on her fair, florid, and otherwise stolid visage, but unable to articulate a syllable, save some trash about “the fate of her mother—and the Trolds.”

“Juliane, have you lost your tongue?” said I. “Speak, girl—Ernestine is ill—ill, my God! and I am to sail in an hour!”

Regardless of all etiquette in the excitement of the moment, I rushed up-stairs to her chamber, and knocked. There was no reply. My heart beat violently as I entered; there was no one within, and every thing bore marked evidence of confusion, and a hurried departure. A wardrobe with its drawers stood open—ransacked and in disorder; a letter, addressed to me, lay upon the table.

My brain became giddy; Prudentia had left me just in the same manner; but I thought not of her then, as I snatched up the letter and tore it open.

“Forgive me, dearest Philip,” it ran; “forgive me the step I

have taken—to leave this island ; it is a course I have long contemplated, but lacked the spirit to put in execution, until this day at noon, when a faithful messenger in a small vessel arrived from our father to say, that he is dying in Holstein, and cannot depart from this world in peace unless he beholds us once again. You know how he loves Gabrielle and me. Could we remain after a request so touching and so terrible ? Beg the good queen to pardon us. Moreover, Gabrielle is ill ; and I know that a change of scene alone can cure her. The vessel we sail with is a Dantzig dogger, with two large sails. Should you see her in the Sound, do say one prayer for us ; and, until we meet again, farewell, dearest Philip, and believe me your own

“ ERNESTINE.”

“ Nyekiöbing, March 28th.”

I remembered the little craft I had seen tacking out of the Sound, and my heart sank as, with a feeling of bitterness and desolation, I descended to the castle-yard, where old Torquil Gorm, our pipe-major, was playing the gathering, strutting to and fro with his helmet on, and the long ribands streaming from his drones.

“ Dioul ! my kinsman—accoutre ! accoutre ! ” exclaimed Ian, rushing after me with his cuirass half buckled ; “ hark to the gallant war-pipe ! Mars and Bellona require new victims. And what do you think Heinrich Vüg (the warder whose wife was carried off by the fairies) has just told me ? ”

“ Oh, Ian, do not talk to me,” said I ; “ my mind is a chaos ! I am a fit companion only for madmen. But what did Heinrich tell you ? ”

“ That our old friend Bandolo has been seen in the Sound by Fynböe the pilot, on board of a dogger with two large sails—the same we passed near Skeilbye.”

“ *A dogger with two sails ! Bandolo !—dost thou say so ?* ” I exclaimed in a broken voice. My heart shrunk up at the words of Ian—a mountain seemed to fall upon me. “ Ernestine in his power ! ” I staggered, and supported myself upon my claymore ; the light seemed to leave my eyes.

Ernestine, in whom was centred all my hopes of the future—entwined with life itself—my happiness, my glory, and fortune,

for she was all to me—and Gabrielle, too!—what might be her fate?

I knew that Bandolo had long fostered the most extravagant ambition—to become the purchaser of a county and coronet in some of those beggared states of Germany where such things were saleable; and Tilly's favour and the Imperial gold had made the bravo and scoutmaster rich as a Lombard Jew. I remembered the conversation between the wretch and his patron at Luneburg; and, if their father was really dying, trembled for the fate of the sisters.

I was stunned, benumbed, and had no sense save that a dreadful calamity—I knew not altogether what—had suddenly dissolved every tie between the world and me. Some time elapsed before Ian could understand me—that Ernestine and her sister had but too surely been decoyed away by a stratagem of the accomplished desperado.

All that passed on this evening appeared to me as a dream. Phadrig Mhor accoutred me; the parade, and inspection of locks and ammunition, the rattle of our drums as we marched under the old castle arch, and filed down to the landing-place; the tears of the kind old queen, who, in her goodness of heart, wept as the brave Highland band embarked on that desperate expedition, from which few—perhaps none—might ever return; all seemed parts of the same misty dream. Then came our reception on board, the warm congratulations of our comrades, stout old Culcraigie, and Red M'Alpine, still wearing his scarf of crape; then the noisy supper in the gun-room, where salted beef, cold Russian tongue, and Holstein bacon, were washed down by many a brown flagon of German wine; then came the frolics and merriment—for, with the heedlessness of soldiers, my comrades forgot the hardships and dangers of the past year, and cared nothing for those that were to come. They spent that night in jovialty as our ship bore away for Rodbye.

I alone was mute, pale, downcast, and inexpressibly miserable.

I was at times in a state of absolute horror. I could not realize my separation from Ernestine; and if, when overcome by thought, sleep closed my eyes, it was but for a moment—her voice came to my ear, and I started and awoke.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAPTURE OF BURG.

I DID my duty well, but mechanically; for my mind was always wandering, and occupied by vague surmises, foreign from what passed around me.

Amid severe storms of frost and snow we came to anchor off Rodbye, and were joined by Kildon's company; thus the whole regiment now was under the command of Ian. With us were one battalion of the Lord Spynie's regiment of Scottish Lowlanders; the Baron Klosterfiörd's new troop of pistoliers (for Karl had escaped from the Imperialists); the Comte de Montgomerie's regiment of French Protestants, and a few slender companies of Danish pikes and musketeers, making barely in all three thousand men. With these the brave King Christian, regardless that he was but as a mouse attacking a lion, resolved to beat up the quarters of the invader at Fehmarn and elsewhere; and if he could not conquer, at least to harass and slay as many of the Imperialists as possible.

Storms of snow detained us a week; at last there was a fine day, when the air was clear, and the hoar-frost hung on the boughs of the leafless trees, and when the black ravens were seen floating above the snow in the sunbeams. This clear weather accompanied us into Fehmer-sund, a channel of deep water, about one mile broad, which separates the isle of Fehmarn from the coast of Holstein.

Looking upon this little place—the jointure of his wife-of-the-left-hand—as a key to the German empire, Christian had resolved on driving out the Imperialists; and at noon came to anchor off Burg, its capital, where we prepared to disembark under a fire of cannon and musketry from a regiment of Walloon infantry, who garrisoned the place.

Though early in April, the day was bitterly cold; for the

season was one of intense severity. The sky and the narrow Sound were both of the purest blue; but the whole island and the opposite coast lay buried under a thick mantle of snow. Here and there along the shore, we could perceive the deep tracks cut to denote the highways leading into the interior; the whole atmosphere glittered, and the breath of the soldiers froze on the cheek-plates of their helmets, or ascended in steamy vapour from the boats, which, with thirty musketeers of our regiment in each, made straight for the shore with drums beating and pipes playing.

I gazed earnestly at the low and level beach of Fehmarn, in the dim hope that Ernestine might have been conveyed there. My whole thoughts were of her, and I am sure Gabrielle was almost forgotten. Love, like grief, makes one very selfish at times. My recollections of that day are dreamy and indistinct. I was desperate, careless of life, and in that frame of mind which would have enabled me to confront a battalion of pikes as readily as I would have encountered a single man. I cared not a fig for what happened, and at the command of Ian Dhu, now our lieutenant-colonel, I gladly sprang into the first boat which, from the *Anna Catharina*, shot off for the shore.

Two men of my company (a M'Farquhar and a Mackay) fell overboard; but the cannon-balls from a flying battery on the shore, were ploughing the water about us, and we had not time to pick up the poor fellows. They called loudly for that succour which, in the hurry of that desperate moment, we were totally unable to yield; and, loaded by their iron trappings, accoutrements, and knapsacks, they sank like stones. What are the lives of two men, when those of thousands, perhaps, are hovering on the brink of eternity?

We landed under cover of a fire from our ships, which battered down the snow-clad houses of Burg to dislodge the Walloons. My company of M'Farquhars had the honour of first touching the ground. The kilted clansmen leaped into the half-frozen water—formed in line, and blew their matches as they advanced. Amid a storm of shot and forest of pikes, we fell on the Walloons with clubbed muskets, and after receiving and returning one volley drove them back.

“Who commands here in Fehmarn?” I asked of one poor fellow, a Walloon ensign, who had been shot through the side, and lay writhing on the ground.

He made no reply, but spat blood at me in his agony and animosity.

“Speak!” said I, holding my sword at his throat; “is it the Count of Carlstein?”

“No—it is Colonel Walter Butler.”

“Then Ernestine is not here,” thought I, hurrying after my men, who, on being reinforced by Spynie’s Scots and Montgomerie’s French, soon drove the Walloons pell-mell into the town, compelling them to leave their cannon behind. They had securely barricaded and loopholed Burg; and, as we knew their commander to be an Irishman, we prepared to encounter a resolute, and for us perhaps a disastrous defence. Landing his entire force, the king invested the place on all sides; and, perceiving that our ships cut off all succour by sea, Colonel Butler sent a drummer to crave a parley, which ended in his entire force marching out with the honours of war, their drums beating and colours flying, amid the yells and execrations of the boors, on whom they had committed innumerable ravages and outrages. From the beach, our boats in a few hours conveyed the whole safely over to the coast of Holstein.

Thus, with a slight loss, King Christian regained the whole island, and after collecting tribute from its capital, and the villages of Petersdorf and Puttgarten, and after tarrying there a few days to refresh, we prepared to reimbarke, encouraged by the good success of our new campaign to make another essay upon the mainland of Holstein.

The house of the burgomaster was converted into a temporary hospital, and among the wounded who had been conveyed there, I recognised my former acquaintance, the Walloon ensign, and gave him a flask of corn brandy, apologising at the same time for the fright I had given him. He was now in better humour, and, being somewhat disposed for conversation, I asked him if he knew “the Count Tilly’s confidant and scoutmaster, Bandolo, the Spanish bravo?”

“I have seen him a thousand times,” he replied; “but you

know not, cavalier, how we soldiers despise this cowardly truckler, who handles, but only in secret, the knife and the pistol. The day before you attacked us, he sailed into the Fehmer-sund with tidings of your coming, for which he received a hundred good dollars from Colonel Butler; hence our barricades at Burg, and our batteries on the beach."

"His vessel?" said I, turning breathlessly towards the Sound.

"A small dogger, with two sails, had on board only himself and three other men, I believe; but the fellow is bold as Ogier le Dane, or the devil himself."

"Were there any ladies with him?"

"Ladies with Bandolo!" repeated the Walloon, laughing, and then making a grimace as his wound twitched him; "why, cavalier, though the fellow is rich as Croesus, the most degraded camp-follower would shudder at his touch. Rumour says that he is steeped to the lips in blood—the blood of assassinated men."

"And where is he now?" I asked, making a terrible effort to appear calm.

"I know not. As your ships entered the Sound on the east, he sailed out by the west, and is gone, I believe, towards Eckernfiörd, where a body of Tilly's troops are cantoned."

"Heaven be thanked!" thought I, leaving the poor officer on his bed of blood-stained straw; "it is on Eckernfiörd that we are next to bend our cannon."

As Fehmarn is a fertile island, we procured an ample store of the butter, cheese, and fresh provisions which the frugal inhabitants had been able to conceal from the Imperial marauders; and in lieu of their hose—now somewhat tattered—our Highlanders obtained some hundred pairs of soft stockings, which had been knitted by the wives and daughters of the boors.

We then re-embarked about the middle of April, minus our preacher or chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Zerubabel Bang, who had the misfortune to fall in a duel. He and a lieutenant of Karl's pistoliers, having quarrelled about the burgomaster's daughter, a pretty little *jungfrau* with blue eyes and blooming complexion, came to high words, and from thence to hard blows with backsword and dagger, and our poor minister (an old fel-

low student of mine at the King's College in the Brave City) was fairly run through the body and slain.

Being a commissioned officer, and having the rank of major, we buried him under the dismantled batteries with military honours. The right wing of the regiment fired three volleys above the grave, and our drums beat the *Point of War*, while the shovels of the pioneers closed his last abode for ever.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. MARK'S DAY.

AGITATED by emotions of no ordinary kind, on the evening of the 26th April I saw the broad harbour of Eckernfiörd open to receive our ships; for in that little town, the painted walls and church spire of which I could see shining afar off in the cold yellow light of a stormy setting sun, Ernestine might be in safety by her father's side, or perhaps with Bandolo.

I cannot describe all that I endured of anger, bitterness, impatience, and anxiety during these weeks of warfare and wandering among the Danish isles and Juteland coasts. Relief could only be found by plunging into the fierce tumult and excitement of strife. When that passed away, my agony and suspense returned with redoubled force.

Old superstition has made the 26th of April, St. Mark's day, an unlucky time for an expedition; and I have known more than one worthy crofter and *bien bonnet-laird*, near my father's tower at home, who dared not plough on St. Mark's day, lest a blight should destroy the fruit of their labour; neither would their wives churn or spin, lest the milk should become soured and the rock ravelled. King Christian knew little of such fancies of the olden time, and cared less for them; thus, after deceiving the enemy by standing off to the seaward, he returned again when the darkness set in, and ordered all to be in readiness for breaking the strong boom which closed the harbour mouth, and for obtaining the town by storm.

By a sudden change in the weather, the snow had almost entirely disappeared, and vegetation had fully commenced; but a cold and stormy wind swept over the darkened waters of the bay, a pitchy gloom enveloped the whole sky, and shrouded in obscurity the low, flat shore of South Juteland. Steadily and

noiselessly our vessel stood towards the harbour mouth, a fire-ship leading the van to burst and destroy the boom, and to force a passage for us. We expected to be all engaged in an hour, and mustered in our arms and in silence on the decks of the three royal ships. We endeavoured in vain to discover the bearing of the shore. It seemed to be visible to King Christian alone; for that able and valiant monarch, being a mariner as well as a warrior, sheathed in his full armour, stood by the tiller, steering the fire-ship in person, and gazing into the gloom with his keen but solitary eye.

“Phadrig,” said I to my sergeant; “look to it, and see that our company have all their matches and bandoliers in service order.”

“I have anticipated your orders, and looked well to their arms and powder,” he replied in his native Gaëlic; but there was an expression in the tall sergeant’s dark face, visible below his steel cap, which startled me, apathetic even as I had now become to casual circumstances.

“How is this, Phadrig?” said I; “are you ill, my good man?”

“It is a dark night even for this kind of work, and the darker the better, perhaps,” said he; “but of all others in the year, St. Mark’s night is the least lucky, either for fighting or ferrying on. I will tell you a story. On this night, fifteen years ago, my father, Dunachadh Bane, and two men of our tribe, who had been sent on a mission from M’Farquhar to M’Ian of Glencoe, quarrelled with some M’Donalds, whom they met on a *creagh* near Glen Etive and the Black Mountain. They fled by Keanlochleven. The night was dark as this; and like a well at the bottom of its steep, black hills, lay the deep but narrow waters of the Leven. It is said a spirit guards them—a dangerous, a shapeless, and revengeful spirit—whose form is concealed by a cloud, but whose voice is often heard before a storm, shrieking from among the rocks that overhang the lake. In the murky midnight they heard a wild cry tossed after them on the gusty wind, as they rushed down the steep Highland pass; again came the cry, and again loud, shrill, and wailing; now it seemed to come from the dark lake, now from the darker mountains, and

now from the blasted pines that overhung the foaming stream which fed the narrow Leven. It curdled their hearts' blood and froze the marrow in their bones—for amid the starless gloom they could see a dark cloud floating over the bosom of the lake; but they were bold and desperate men, and heeding less this terrible warning than the arrows of the M'Donalds, they sprang down the side of the shelving mountain, and reached the still, black, solemn lake, the waters of which were partly frozen. A boat lay among the withered reeds; they leaped in—they put off with an exulting shout, and my father grasped the tiller.

“‘Black be your end!’ shouted a voice like thunder over their heads, and the Glencoe men heard it with terror, as they rushed to the shore of the Leven. ‘*Bu dubh a dhiol!*’” said Phadrig, pausing; “yes—black indeed was my father's fate. The dark vapour descended between the steep hills, a torrent of wind tore up the bosom of the Leven, revealing its ghastly depths; the water rose in billows, and lashed the overhanging hills; again the shriek was heard, the cloud of the angry spirit swept away; but the boat had vanished, for it had been engulfed by the ebbing water. The M'Donalds fled, abandoning in their terror all the cattle they had taken in the creagh. Dunachadh Bane and his two companions had perished, unshiven and unassailed; and long the priest of our tribe, James of Jerusalem, prayed for their souls in the old kirk of Strathdee. Now, Captain Rollo,” continued Phadrig, in a low impressive voice, and while drawing closer to me; “ever as St. Mark's night returns, a boat with three men in it is seen to cross the Leven.”

“Pshaw, Phadrig—can a stout fellow like you believe this?”

“Firmly as I believe the blessed gospels. Once I saw it myself.”

“It must have been mere imagination,” said I.

“It was *not*,” said he; “the April night was cold and clear. To the sorrow of the poor, the season had been backward, and the snow-wreaths lay deep in glen and corrie. With no companion but my dog, I had come through the savage glen of Larochmhor, and round by the base of Ben Nevis, on whose peaks the snow seldom melts. I reached Keanlochleven. Though the month was April, the water lay at my feet a sheet of wave-

less ice. All was still as death, and my own shadow spread far before me over the wilderness of snow, for the moon was low at the end of the narrow vale. It hung there like a silver shield, broad, round, and full, between a cleft of the rugged mountains.

“I paused a moment to mutter a prayer, and look on the place where my father had perished. The lake lay at my feet, I have said ; but I had no fear of the water spirit, for then the moon was bright. I had a good dram under my belt, and my claymore at my side. Suddenly, I perceived something moving across the frozen surface of the lake—three hundred feet below me ; my dog uttered a howl, and crept close to my side. ‘Blessed be Heaven !—am I blind ?’ I exclaimed, pressing a hand upon my eyes ; ‘am I blind, or dreaming ?’ A boat with three Highlanders in it passed before me—I knew they were Strathdee men by the cock of their bonnets—one steered, while two pulled the oars ; and, like the shadow of a cloud, the boat and its rowers glided across the *hard frozen surface* of the Leven, slowly and noiselessly, until it disappeared under the dark shadow cast by the mountain side across the salt lake at its foot. A deathly chill came over me ; my hair stood on end ; for I knew that my father’s spirit had passed before me.

“Since that hour, captain,” said Phadrig, pressing his hand upon his brow ; “I have never gone within twenty miles of Ben Nevis, nor would I for all the gold in the hill of Keir. I have gone round by the Braes of Rannoch, by the great desert and the Uisc Dhu, rather than pass the glen of the Leven. But how I crossed the mountains—how I came down the Devil’s Staircase, and reached Glencoe (for I also was going on a mission from Ian Dhu to M’Ian), the Lord alone knows ; for of that dire April night—the night of St. Mark—I remember no more.”

Phadrig had just finished this wild story when a blue light was burned low, almost under the counter of the fireship, as a warning to drop our anchors ; and they were let go noiselessly, the rope-cables running through hauseholes deluged by buckets of grease, to prevent the sound alarming the enemy, whose batteries swept the boom and its vicinity.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRESHIP.

WHILE our vessels hauled up their courses, and swung round with their heads to the wind, the fireship, favoured by the obscurity which concealed her, and by a north-east wind, with all her sails and studding-sails set, ran right towards the boom, which closed the narrow *Strait*; for the promontory on which the town stands closes in the extremity of the outer harbour, and divides it from the inner fiörd. The boom itself was an enormous log of Memel timber, to which a number of masts, yards, and spars were lashed. At each end strong cables secured it to the shore. Immediately within it lay a number of ships full of Imperial stores, and on board of these the crews must have kept but a sleepy watch that night, or the northern mist had blinded them.

The warlike Christian had seen the fireship, which was about a hundred and fifty tons of burden, constructed under his own eye; she was crammed to the hatches with combustibles, and fitted with grappling irons, to seize and destroy the boom and shipping. She was fitted up with troughs full of powder and melted pitch; these communicated with her fire-barrels and chambers for blowing open the ports, at which the flames were to be emitted. Her decks were sheeted over with powder, rosin, sulphur, tar, pitch, and grease. Her gunwale was surrounded by bavins of brushwood, having the bushends all laid outwards, forming a thick hedge, which was saturated in the same conglomeration of inflammable matter with which she was loaded from keel to hatches; and with which her whole rigging and masts, sails and running cordage, were thickly coated; while barrels of oil and tar, powder and other preparations, were piled upon her deck.

Through the dark gloom we discerned—or imagined we could discern—this floating magazine of destruction standing steadily on towards the boom, at a safe distance from which our ships had come to anchor. All the large boats were lowered, and noiselessly two thousand armed men, with the old blades of our own regiment leading the van, slowly and with well-muffled oars put off towards the shore.

Ian with my company—once his own—composed entirely of brave men of his own name and kindred, led the way. Red McAlpine and Kildon followed in the next boat, with their companies; then came the remainder of our Highlanders in pinnaces; then the Danish musketeers of the King's regiment, and the French companies of the gallant Count de Montgomerie.

The boats grounded at a distance from the shore; there was a murmur of discontent among the French and Danes; but now, as at Fehmarn, our bold Scottish lads slung their muskets, sprang overboard, formed line in the water, and, grasping each others' hands, led the way towards the shore.

“Softly and quickly, comrades!” cried Ian Dhu, whose head, surmounted by the entire eagle's wing, towered above all others, as he advanced to the front with a colour in his hand; “we shall be at them with our pikes before helmets are buckled or matches blown.”

At that moment the fireship blew up!

After firing the train with his own royal hand, King Christian had dropped into a small boat, and been pulled on board of the *Anna Catharina*, on the poop of which he stood anxiously watching the effect of his skill.

The fireship reached the boom, and running full tilt against it, was retained there by her grapnels; the lighted trains rushed through all parts of the ship, and in a moment the troughs, the decks, the rigging and the tarred sails, were enveloped in one vast pyramid of roaring flame, which shed a lurid glow on the waters around it, and the shore before us. Brighter and brighter it grew; we could see in the foreground the whole outline of Eckernfiörd, then esteemed the prettiest town in Juteland, with its high old German gables and wooden spire, the long rows of trees that shaded its streets, and surrounded the half circular

harbour; the barricades which closed its avenues; the palisaded breastwork we had come to storm, and the long bridge with its Tollbooth bristling with cannon. Brighter yet and broader grew that sheet of wavering light, and tipped with it, as they rose and fell, the waves of the Baltic rolled like billows of liquid fire; the low flat shore on which they broke was bathed in alternate glows of yellow flame and dusky-red, as the various combustibles ignited in succession.

We saw the white froth amid which the vast boom was surging and chafing; we saw distinctly the masts, spars, and rigging of the storeships within; we saw the casements of the town—even the gilt vane on the church spire shone in this glorious but terrible flush of flame; while the hoarse drums beat to arms, and we heard the loud and sudden murmur, as from a crowd of startled men, arise within the town. The Imperialists rushed to their posts, and in three minutes their helmets were seen glittering in lines behind the barricades, for the town, from which all the inhabitants had fled, was but rudely and hastily fortified.

Like a volcano showering a million of burning brands over the whole fiörd, the fireship blew up with a shock which made the waters vibrate and lash the level shore, while the concussion was felt at the bottom of every ship in the fleet.

The great boom broke in two like a withered reed. A momentary silence followed; then, from the vast height to which they had been shot by the explosion, we heard the burning pieces fall hissing into the water. But their expiring blaze was almost immediately renewed by the storeships, which caught fire, and enabled the Danish vessels to cannonade the town, from the falling roofs of which the bricks and tiles flew in showers through the air, as the round shot boomed among them.

Having formed in the water in three columns, under the Count de Montgomerie, with the Highlanders in front, we advanced pell-mell to storm the graff and stockade which enclosed the town, on that side where a gate opened towards the road from Kiel; from these works the enemy opened a brisk fire on us. Ian Dhu, an officer as skilful as he was brave, sent Captain-lieutenant Sir Patrick Mackay, with fifty musketeers of his own company, into a lofty house, from the windows of which their

fire swept the stockades in flank. Under cover of this we stormed them with comparative ease, throwing ourselves into the graff, officers and men, pikes, musketeers, and colours; we rushed from thence up the rough glacis, climbing with one hand and fighting with the other, though, by the storm of lead which rained upon our ranks, many a brave fellow was swept back into the slough of the ditch to die among its mud and slime.

Torn down or hewn to pieces in some places, surmounted in others, the palisades were won, and Ian Dhu, though bleeding from three wounds, had the honour first to place St Andrew's cross on the summit, and, with a wild yell of triumph, the hardy Highlanders closed up beneath it, and broad over their heads its blue silk folds were rustling in the midnight blast. In the deadly mêlée that ensued here, the Austrians were over-matched by our Scottish cavaliers, who used their long claymores with both hands, hewing down with the edge, while the former only gave point with their slender rapiers, which were much less effective. I found this particularly the case when encountering a gigantic Spanish officer (for there were three companies of Castilians in the town). He lunged at me incessantly; but parrying one terrible thrust with my claymore, after narrowly escaping being run through by a demi-lance, I overthrew the Don by a backhanded blow from my dirk.

Another Spanish cavalier, a tall and powerful man, wearing a burgonet of bright steel, was disarmed by Phadrig Mhor, at whom he discharged his pistols after surrender.

"Yield—yield!" cried Phadrig in Gaëlic, "or I'll run a yard of my halbert into your haggis-bag?"

"Quartel, señor Valoroso!" exclaimed the Spaniard; but the prayer came too late; for by one blow of his Lochaber axe, Phadrig, who was not blessed with over much patience, sliced his head in two like a Swedish turnip, cutting him through bone and steel helmet to the neck.

The Imperialists now gave way from the gate of Kiel along the whole line of ramparts, and retired through the streets with great precipitation to the church, which they entered in confusion, and followed so closely by our soldiers, that many Highlanders entered with them, and were shot or taken. Save a hundred or

so, who were killed as they retired through the streets, all reached the church, got in, barricadoed the doors, and from every part of the edifice opened a terrible fire upon us.

Montgomerie's Frenchmen assailed one flank, the king's Danish regiment another, and Ian led us to the assault of the great door; but for a time we failed to make any impression upon it. The night was bleak, dark, and exceedingly stormy; the wind shook our standards and rustled our lofty plumes, and we heard it (during the pauses of the musketry) howling through the louvre-boarded spire of the church, and the high gables of the old houses; but the pauses in the fusilade were few and far between. Through the windows and from behind the planks and benches with which they had barricaded them, four or five companies of Imperialists continued to fire upon us; and the bright red streaks of flame, as they burst forth incessantly above, below, and on every side, lighted up the quaint façade of the old church, the greater part of which was of wood. Every moment our bullets tore away large splinters. A company of Irishmen in the belfry made a terrible slaughter among my company, on whom they shot down in security without receiving a ball in return, for their position was too elevated for our muskets to reach them. Ian became greatly excited by the loss of so many of his soldiers and kinsmen.

"Count of Montgomerie!" he exclaimed; "let cannon be brought and the door blown in! My brave followers—the children of my father's people—shall not perish thus!"

"Dioul, my colonel!" added Kildon, whose company united its efforts with mine to burst open the door, before which the dead encumbered the steps three deep, and which resounded beneath our mingled blows like the head of a gigantic drum; "let us blow the d—d kirk up, and, by my father's hand, I will place the first stone of your cairn."

"May the ashes of these Spaniards be scattered on the waters!" added M'Alpine in the same forcible language, and staggering as a bullet grazed his helmet; "for, by the greystone of M'Gregor! I believe they are the same men who so cruelly slew old Dunbar and five hundred of our gallant hearts at Bredenburg."

"Yea—after surrender, in cold blood," said Lumsdaine, my

lieutenant, the sole survivor of that affair ; “ I know them by the fashion of their doublets—forward then—let us cut to pieces this kennel of blood-hounds ! ”

“ Tullach Ard ! ” cried the Mackenzies of Kildon’s company.

“ Cairn na cuimhne ! ” added my men of Strathdee.

“ Revenge ! remember Dunbar and Bredenburg ! ” cried the whole battalion, with a wild Highland hurrah ; and the soldiers redoubled their efforts, while the dying and dead fell fast on every side.

Suddenly there arose a cry of—

“ The vaults—the church vaults are full of powder—five hundred barrels—Bredenburg ! Bredenburg mercy ! let us blow them up ! ”

This proved to be actually the case. Whether it was a mere speculation of our soldiers, or that they had been informed of the circumstances by some wounded Holsteiner (who had been compelled to serve the Austrians), I know not ; but it was immediately acted upon.

Heedless of the leaden storm which was poured upon them, Phadrig Mhor, and a score of the brave fellows, rushed close to the walls of the church, beat down the bars of certain wooden gratings which admitted air to the vaults, and threw in five or six fireballs—engines formed of every combustible. These filled the whole basement story with a deluge of light, as they blazed, roared, and rolled about like flaming dragons ; and to the eyes of a few revealed, in the very centre of the place, a goodly pile of wooden powder barrels.

“ Retire—retire ! ” was the cry, and our men fell back on all sides, dragging with them several of the wounded, who were unable to crawl away ; but we had scarcely retreated fifty paces down the main street, each side of which was bordered by stately beech-trees, when the earth shook beneath our feet, a blaze of yellow light filled the windows of the church, its broad roof of slates was shot into the air and rent asunder, to descend like rain upon the streets ; a mighty column of fire poured upwards from the crater formed by the walls ; I saw them gape and rend in every direction ; the taper spire shook like a willow wand, then crumbled and vanished with a crash. One half the edifice

was blown into the air, the other half fell inwards. In an instant all became dark (save where the store-ships, half-burned to the water-edge, shed a sickly light upon the half-ruined town), and we heard a shower of stones, beams, slates, and materials of every kind, falling on the tops of the houses and into the street around us. With these came down many a scorched and shattered fragment of a human form; for at least five hundred men had, in one moment, been blown into eternity.

Among these were a hundred stout-hearted Irishmen of Butler's regiment.

Many of our men were severely injured by the debris of the explosion; after which I remember little more of that night, being struck senseless by a piece of falling timber.

I have a dim recollection of being borne away somewhere; and then of feeling the soft hands of a woman chafing mine, and pouring a cooling essence on my brow.

I thought of Ernestine; and then, as if that dear thought had conjured up her image and her presence, I seemed to hear her voice murmuring in my ear, as she wept and mourned bitterly.

Book the Ninth.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SISTERS.

WHILE I am thus disposed of at Eckernförd, it may not be out of place to relate the adventures of the fair sisters (on their being decoyed from Nyekiöbing), as I afterwards learned from them, and so far as I can remember.

In the course of this narrative, many a long forgotten scene and face have come back to my memory by pursuing a train of thought. At first, it was my intention to have related only the battles and sieges wherein our valiant Scots of the old invincible regiment of Strathnayer distinguished themselves; but I have been compelled to linger fondly over the past, and thus long buried thoughts and hopes; the sentiments of my earlier years, have come back to me in all their strength and freshness. Hence I can relate the faith and pride of Ernestine, and the love of poor Gabrielle—one man's knavery and another man's valour—as if the events of those stirring times had all occurred but yesterday.

On board the dogger which bore the sisters from Falster, were only Bandolo, his friend Bernhard, the amiable woodman of Korslack (who has been already introduced to the reader), and three sailors of Dantzig, to whom the craft belonged.

Bandolo was disguised as a well-fed Lutheran clergyman of Glückstadt, and Bernhard acted as his servant, and had knots of black riband, on each of his shoulders. He had brought to Ernestine a feigned message, that the count her father was dying of wounds in Holstein; although quite aware that, by the intrigues and jealousy of old Tilly, he had been summoned to

Vienna by the Emperor, who—as it was currently reported—now viewed him with the utmost coldness. Bandolo had been despatched by Tilly towards Assens and Falster, to inquire into the number of the Danish forces, and the probable movements of their king; but hearing that the count's daughters were at Nyekiöbing, he immediately conceived the project of conveying them away; and as he considered that he had now amassed a sufficient sum to realise the dream of his ambition—a Hanoverian count-ship—he resolved to retire from public life, to repose upon his laurels, with the high-born bride whom, Tilly in his cynical and mischievous spirit, had urged him by all means to procure; for secretly the generalissimo owed the colonel-general of the cavalry a mortal grudge.

By a profitable speculation, Bandolo had sold the younger sister, Gabrielle, to Count Merodé for a thousand ducats; and, being highly pleased with his investment, that gentle commander—who had compelled a Holstein merchant to furnish the ducats under terror of musket-shot, and place them in his hands—was impatiently awaiting her arrival at the strong fortress of Fredricksort, on the gulf of Kiel in Danische-wald, the capital of which is Eckernfiörd. The castle was occupied by the soldiers of the count; who, by a despatch from Vienna, had been desired to constitute himself governor of all that district, the poor boors of which were nearly driven mad by the severity with which he exacted tribute.

Bandolo's dogger sailed towards Fehmarn, where he gave such information to Colonel Butler as enabled that officer to afford us a warm reception. The scout-master then bore away towards the coast of Danische-wald; but on both sides of the isle of Fehmarn he encountered such tremendous gales, that the whole thoughts and energies of himself and his accomplice were occupied by fears for their own safety; thus, without the sisters being disturbed by their attentions or insults, the dogger entered the gulf of Kiel, and anchored off the Wohlder shore.

Confined to the little cabin during this cold and dreary voyage of nearly a hundred and fifty miles, and being wholly occupied by anxiety to reach their father, the sisters had failed to observe the very remarkable conduct of their guardian, the Lutheran

clergyman, and his valet, who seemed to be on the most familiar terms with each other; and who, when the wind blew, and the dogger dipped surging down into the trough of the angry sea, drank schnaps out of the same horn, and swore a few round oaths as emphatically as a couple of Merodeurs.

A large black doublet, well bombasted in front, white clerical bands, and black satin knee breeches, with a white wig and smoothly shaven chin, so completely metamorphosed Bandolo into a sleek oily clergyman, with a somewhat comical but leering eye, that his own mother would not have recognised the bravo she had brought into the world—that dreaded and avowed bravo, who was usually to be seen loitering like a bull-dog about the door of Tilly's tent, wearing a leather doublet, and a belt stuck full of poniards, a long lovelock, a rapier five feet in length, and a visage bloated by beer and excesses of every description.

Whatever strange ideas might have floated through his evil brain, or whatever promptings to mischief, the circumstance of these two beautiful girls being far out on the open ocean, and completely at the mercy of him and Bernhard, might have been suggested by his bad angel, thank Heaven! which sent the stormy wind to furrow up the deep, and roll the little bark upon its waters like a cork, their coward hearts were solely occupied by fears for their own safety—fears which every bottle of schnaps in the locker could not allay. Thus, without the least suspicion of the trick which had been played them, or the trap into which they had fallen, the sisters saw, from a window in the little cabin, the setting sun of the 20th of April reddening the shores of Holstein, as the dogger ran into the little gulf of Kiel.

Ernestine was pleased to perceive that Gabrielle had revived a little during this brief voyage. Either the separation from Ian, a transference to new scenes, or that all her thoughts were with her dying father, had produced this salutary effect; and she hoped that in time, this passion, which she deemed so degrading even to her impulsive nature, would soon be forgotten like a dream.

Instead of entering the harbour of any of the large towns, the dogger was anchored off a miserable little village, inhabited by

poor people, who subsisted by dressing the skins of squirrels, which abound in that neighbourhood.

The first object of Bandolo was to separate the sisters, and, without creating any alarm, to exchange Gabrielle for the thousand ducats of Count Merodé, whose garrison of Fredricksort was but a few miles off. About sunset he presented himself in the cabin, and, with all the suavity of manner he could muster, requested that "the ladies would prepare for going shoreward."

During the short voyage they had seen but little of him; for, as I have already mentioned, the stormy weather had given him ample occupation elsewhere; and in truth, he was invariably awed into a state of unpleasant stupidity in their presence, and found himself almost unable to address them. This wretched man—this spy and assassin—steeped to the lips in a thousand secret crimes and dishonourable acts, found his blustering spirit, and savage heart quail before the dignity of perfect innocence, and the angelic purity which pervaded the presence of Ernestine and Gabrielle.

Arrayed in his white wig, ample black doublet, white bands and Geneva cloak, like a Lutheran churchman, and wearing a broad velvet hat with a steeple-crown, an enormous pair of barnacles, and a silver-headed cane dangling at his dexter wrist, to increase the respectability of his appearance, Bandolo presented a hand to each of the sisters, and conducted them into the boat, by which they were rowed ashore. Bernard of Korslack, dressed in modest dark livery, carried the mails and saddle-bags; but Ernestine remarked that there was one mail, which the worthy clergyman averred to be full of MS. sermons, but would scarcely trust out of his hand for a single moment, and which seemed to be very heavy, and his own peculiar care.

In fact, this mail afterwards proved to be filled with gold, and ample orders on the Imperial treasury, signed by Wallenstein, by Tilly, and Count Leslie of Balquhan, high chamberlain of the Empire—the dear-earned fruits of a long career of espionage and atrocity; and on the contents of that beloved mail, Bandolo (that human compound of avarice and cruelty), based all his ambitious hopes of future rank; for it contained the price of his expected county.

Now, when in the open boat, and when the bright flush of the setting sun shone along the rippling water, Ernestine for the first time remarked, with undefined uneasiness, the peculiar aspect of those who accompanied them. The countenance of the clergyman—he called himself Doctor, having taken degrees at Leyden—was somewhat livid, and marked by two or three unseemly scars; but he might have served as a chaplain in the army, or fought a few college duels. He had certainly a very remarkable expression of eye; and, whichever way Ernestine turned, it was fixed upon her in a manner that made her feel inexpressibly uncomfortable; but the moment her calm, steady, and inquiring glance met his, the reverend doctor turned abruptly, and gazed in another direction.

Bernhard, the valet, had a somewhat bloated countenance, and sleepy red eyes, like those of a sot; with a continual expression of suppressed merriment about them, as if he would gladly have indulged himself in a hoarse laugh, but dared not.

Gabrielle did not see these things; her mind was too intently occupied by the shore they were nearing; by the expectation of embracing her father; and by heartfelt satisfaction to exchange the miseries of the dingy little cabin for the comforts and confidence experienced on terra firma, to observe either the eyes or noses of those who were conducting her there.

"What is the name of this village, Herr?" asked Ernestine, as the boat ran alongside a little jetty built of large rough stones.

"I do not know, madam," replied Bandolo, adjusting his barnacles, and gazing intently at the half-dozen of red-tiled cottages occupied by the squirrel-curriers; "do you, Bernhard?"

"Nay, not I—how should I? I never was in Danische-wald before."

"Then do you know, how far it is from this to Fredricksort?"

"Where the count awaits you—ten miles—is it not so, Bernhard?"

Bernhard growled an assent.

"Ah, if we should be too late to reach my father!" said Gabrielle, clasping her hands; "and we have been so many hours in yonder little vessel."

“What is Fredricksort?” asked Ernestine.

“A castle of vast strength, lady.”

“And what troops are with our father there?”

“I do not know, *grâne*,” replied Bandolo; for he knew that to have mentioned Merodé and his Merodeurs might excite suspicion; “do you know, Bernhard?”

“Why, Herr Doctor,” stammered the pretended valet; “I thought that you knew very well that the regiment of——”

“Carlstein—oh yes!” interrupted Bandolo just in time, but eying his valet savagely out of the corners of his barnacles; “how could I forget! yes, lady, the musketeers of Carlstein—none know them better than I do—occupy the fortress.”

“Musketeers!” reiterated Ernestine; “our father’s regiment is Cavalry!”

“To be sure—how could I forget—you blundering ass, Bernhard!—’Tis my valet who makes such mistakes; but here we are. Welcome to Wohlder, ladies!” said Bandolo, raising his hat, and with it his long white wig, a mistake by which he nearly discovered his black hair and face, by which Ernestine might have recognised the terrible familiar of Count Tilly, who had been pointed out to her on two occasions—once in Vienna, and once in the Imperial camp.

During this brief conversation, Bandolo had experienced all the uneasiness already described; and his admiration for the fine person of Ernestine combated with restraint and fear, which at times kindled a spark of rage in his heart, and made him almost hate her for possessing a power that awed him by a glance. Yet Ernestine was quite unconscious of possessing this power, and knew not that it was required.

Feeling, she knew not why, a sentiment of disdain for her conductors, she relapsed into silence, and permitted herself and Gabrielle to be led to a cottage, the poor occupants of which received them with the utmost respect. This was increased by the appearance of the leatheren mails, and still more by a piece of gold, which Bandolo placed in the hand of the goodman of the cottage, requesting him to search the whole neighbourhood, and hire horses for Fredricksort, whither they were travelling on the service of the King of Denmark.

The *husbonde* replied, that "close by there was a farm, the goodman of which had been cruelly murdered last week by the Merodeurs in Fredricksort; and whose widow, he believed, would gladly lend the Herr her spouse's horses for a small consideration, as she and her children were starving, Count Merodé's men having made every thing march, from the haystacks in the yard to the eggs in the coop."

"Away then, boor, get these horses, and this shall be the happiest night of your life."

"What was the peasant saying, reverend sir?" asked the anxious Ernestine on the departure of the Jutlander, whose language she did not understand.

"Alas, Lady!" said Bandolo, seating himself with an air of dejection; "prepare yourself for melancholy intelligence. The poor count—ah me—well, what a world it is!"

"My father—what of my poor father?" asked both girls together, rushing to his side with their eyes full of tears.

"He is still lingering at Fredricksort, but life is scarcely expected for him; and the emperor has sent his own physician, Herr Blyster, to attend him."

"Oh! the dear, good emperor!" exclaimed Gabrielle, with sorrowful ardour.

"Herr Blyster!" mused Ernestine; "I did not think that was the name of the emperor's physician." Neither it was; but the name was the suggestion of Bandolo's own imagination, which sometimes was not a very happy one.

"Trust in the Lord, lady—trust in the Lord!" said he, turning up his eyes.

Gabrielle clung to her sister, and did nothing but weep. Bernhard stood behind them, making grimaces and grotesque contortions of visage at his reverend master, who one moment seemed inclined to laugh, and the next to swear, at a folly which might undo all, and perhaps prevent their obtaining peacefully the Count of Merodé's thousand ducats, of which Master Bernhard was to receive a good share—as Bandolo had promised faithfully; but without the least intention of giving him a stiver.

Darkness set in; the poor woman of the cottage lighted a

solitary candle, and from her cupboard brought a glass of birch-wine for each of the ladies, and another of schnaps for the Herr and his valet.

Ernestine was just expressing to Gabrielle her impatience to be gone—her uneasiness to be in this unknown cottage at night, on an enemy's coast, with two strangers—for when in the dogger with the sailors, she did not feel herself so desolate—when the boor returned with the horses, two of which had side-saddles, and they all mounted hastily.

After securely buckling his beloved portmanteau to the crupper of his horse, after paying the peasant, and after carefully examining in the dark four small pistols and two poniards, which he carried under his clerical doublet, señor Bandolo whispered to Bernhard the project he wished to accomplish—the quiet separation of the sisters by a little piece of finesse, which he was certain they would never suspect or discover, until too late to retrieve themselves. It was simply this—

He had learned from the boor which couple of the four horses were the swiftest, and on them he mounted Bernhard and Gabrielle, instructing the former to spur on to the front, and wheel off by a certain bypath towards Fredricksort; while he, with the other sister, meant to ride slowly, and pursue a path quite different towards a certain cottage, which they both knew of in the wood of Eckernfiörd. There Bernhard was to meet them, and bring the ducats of Count Merodé—the price of Gabrielle.

“Now, ladies,” said Bandolo, “are you good horsewomen?”

“Ernestine was the best at Vienna,” said Gabrielle, whipping up her Holsteiner, which caracoled under her light weight.

“Gabrielle—Gabrielle!” exclaimed her eldest sister; “take care what you are about, madcap! You will unhorse yourself and me too. Will she not, reverend sir?”

“Now, ladies, we have ten miles of clear road before us, and the moon will soon rise. Let us start by pairs along this bridle road, and see which couple will first reach Fredricksort.”

“Away—I shall be first with our dear father,” said Gabrielle, anxious to keep in front, and giving a lash to her Holsteiner, which shot away at a headlong pace. Bernhard dashed on by

her side, for he was a good horseman, having been a valet to Merodé at Vienna, where he had been scourged and dismissed for selling his master's cloaks and doublets.

Ernestine and Bandolo followed at full gallop; but as the road was narrow, the bravo contrived to incommodate her horse and his own in such a manner, that their speed was considerably retarded. Bernhard and Gabrielle bore on at an uninterrupted pace, and, despite all the entreaties of Ernestine, disappeared into the darkness in front. This was the very thing Bandolo had hoped to accomplish.

"Do not be alarmed, grafine, they will not reach the fortress ten minutes before us," said he, quite enchanted by the sudden success of his scheme.

At last he and Ernestine passed on their right the narrow path which led towards the gulf of Kiel, and by which he knew that Bernhard and Gabrielle had struck off to the castle of Fredricksort; and far along the level way his quick and practised ear detected the tramp of their horses' hoofs. He passed it, and spurring on, slyly administered now and then a lash to the horse of Ernestine, urging it along a road which he knew conducted them straight to the place of rendezvous—the solitary cottage in the forest of Eckernförd.

Ernestine whipped and caressed her horse. Every pace the poor girl supposed was bringing her nearer and more near to the couch of her dying father.

CHAPTER X.

THE FOREST OF ECKERNFÖRD.

BANDOLO, who knew every foot of the way, avoided the villages and rode towards Eckernförd, which, from the landing-place, was double the distance he had mentioned to Ernestine as the space to be travelled. As she was too acute not to perceive this, after they had ridden without speaking for some miles in the dark (for there was no moon, and scarcely a star visible, as the clouds were coming up in heavy masses from the Baltic on their right), she made some inquiries about this fortress, where, as he had said, her father commanded, and how far it might yet be distant.

"It should be just beyond those trees, lady," replied the disguised spy.

"Should," retorted Ernestine in great displeasure; "are you not quite certain that it is?"

"How can one be certain of any thing in so dark a night? But trust in the Lord, lady—trust in the Lord!"

"Herr Doctor, you are very fond of repeating that tiresome phrase; but remember, sir, that at present I trust to *you*, and it seems that you are leading me towards a dense forest.

"Through that forest lies our way, grafine. I did not make the road. If I had, I should perhaps have taken it round by the shore of the haven; but, as it lies through the forest, we must pursue it, or remain where we are."

The narrow horse-path, which hitherto had been bordered only by smooth green meadows, divided by quickset hedges, now became gradually lost in that forest of tall trees which lies between Eckernförd and Kiel,* and so dense became the entwined

* I know not whether the forest referred to by our cavalier is still extant. It was so in 1702. See "*Travels in the retinue of the English Envoy, 1702*"—printed at the Ship in St. Paul's churchyard, 1707.

branches and other obstructions incident to a wood growing in a state of nature, that their horses could scarcely move at times, and Bandolo now dispensed with his circular barnacles (a severe impediment to the vision of one who did not require them), and gazed around with all the air of a man who had completely lost himself.

"Now, sir," said the impatient Ernestine, "what a scrape you have brought me into! Separated from my sister, who cannot have come this way, else we should have found her in this labyrinth; and separated also from my dear father, who may die before I reach Fredricksort, and while we are fruitlessly wandering in this provoking wood; besides, there may be wild animals or robbers in it, and you are, of course, without arms."

"Heaven forbid, lady, I should ever trust to other weapons than those of the spirit. *Maldicion—Maldicion de Dios!*" he growled between his teeth; "if once I have her safe in the cottage of old Dame Krümpel, I will make her pay dearly for all the trouble her pride has cost me, and for having my face scratched in this rascally thicket."

"What did you say, Herr Doctor?"

"Only a prayer, that we may not meet with any robbers or wild animals, as you said—ha—ha!"

"Or broken soldiers."

"Or with Bandolo," he added.

"Count Tilly's spy?" said Ernestine; "'tis rumoured that he knows every foot of ground in Denmark, so I wish that we could meet with him; though he is a guilty wretch of whom even the Merodeurs speak with contempt and horror."

Bandolo uttered a low, ferocious laugh. Ruffian as he was, and callous to every sentiment of humanity, her words stung him to the soul; for there was something inexpressibly cutting in this hearty and undisguised contempt, as expressed by a beautiful woman. He writhed under it, and a savage glow of mingled triumph and revenge spread through his breast, as he exultingly contemplated the terror, the catastrophe, and the downfall that were awaiting her. His eagerness sharpened his faculties.

"I see a light—a spark—to our left. This way, lady," said he, seizing the bridle of her horse, and conducting her down a narrow track, where the pine trunks grew so close that there was

scarcely room for steed and rider to pass between them ; but in a few minutes they reached a small and rudely built cottage, which stood by the margin of a little tarn. It was the place where Bernhard was to rejoin Bandolo, and pay over the price of poor Gabrielle.

The bravo alighted from his saddle, and, fastening the bridles of both horses to the branch of a tree, threw open the cottage door, and led in Ernestine.

An oil lamp shed a faint light on the interior of this poor habitation, the furniture of which consisted of a table and couple of stools, of such rough construction that the bark yet adhered to the wood. Here and there a naked spar of the rough wooden roof came out of the obscurity in which dust, cobwebs, and darkness involved it ; the floor was of hard-beaten clay. The cottage consisted of what we Scots call a *but* and a *ben*, or two apartments. One end of the outer was spanned by the rude lintel of a wide chimney, within which, and close to a few smouldering embers, an old hag, with hands like a kite's claws, sat on a block of wood, skinning squirrels and chattering over her work. She looked up, and Bandolo, as he expected, recognised Dame Krümpel, who, after her expulsion from Glückstadt by order of the puissant burgomaster, Herr Dubbelsteirn, had found her way to the eastern coast of the peninsula.

They greeted each other in a dialect of the German so guttural that Ernestine did not understand it. Then the old woman snatched up her lamp, and, holding it aloft, surveyed with her fierce eyes—which were keen and deep as two gimlet holes—the tall figure of Ernestine, who, on seeing this repulsive old woman approach with her shrivelled hands dyed in blood, shrunk back, and drew herself up to her full height, while a disdainful expression stole over her beautiful face, on which her broad Spanish hat and long black feather cast an impressive shadow.

Old Krümpel croaked and grinned as she set down her iron lamp, and quietly resumed her occupation.

Bandolo now brought in his heavy portmanteau, which he carefully deposited on the table ; he then placed beside it two leathern bottles, which he took from his pockets, after securing the cottage-door.

"Be seated, madame—and here Krümpel, old hag! get us glasses, cups, or whatever you have; I long for a taste of schnaps, as doubtless the lady does for a drop of kirschwasser—for I have both."

"I beseech you, sir, to lose no time in procuring a guide," said Ernestine, whose heart was bursting with impatience, grief, and alarm.

"A guide—for where?"

"Fredricksort."

"Content yourself, my pretty one; what the devil would you do at Fredricksort?" he asked, abandoning all his assumed manner. "Surely one of you is quite enough among the rough Merodeurs."

Ernestine was petrified by this speech, and still more when the pretended clergyman threw aside his wig, revealing his coal black hair, and that long and peculiar lock by which he was generally known; and, opening his ample doublet, displayed below, his cases of poniards and pistols.

"Maldicion de Dios! ha, ha! what use is there in masquerading any longer? I am Bandolo, Madame Ernestine, and we may as well be friends at once; so give me a kiss to begin with, though I *am* one upon whom even the wild Merodeurs look *with contempt and horror!*"

He bluntly approached her, but paused; for the expression of her eyes arrested him, and he quailed before it—he, Bandolo!

Never did terror, anger, and aversion lend a brighter flash to more beautiful eyes than those of Ernestine; and their lofty gaze arrested the insolence of Bandolo, charming the steps of one whom the laws of neither God nor man could bind. He growled an oath and a laugh together; sat down and took a mouthful of schnaps. Ernestine turned anxiously towards the old woman; but that worthy appeared to have neither ears nor eyes for what was passing, and was tearing the skin from the body of a squirrel with the utmost unconcern.

Disdaining to say a word, Ernestine grasped her riding-rod, gave another fiery glance at Bandolo with her tearless eyes, and boldly prepared to retire. Seizing her arm, he forced her

into a seat, and, placing his back against the door, burst into a shout of derisive laughter, which made her blood curdle.

The thought of Gabrielle, away, she knew not where, with this man's companion, filled her whole soul with alarm ; and in that thought all sense of her own danger was swept away. Terror almost paralysed her, and she burst into tears.

Bandolo eyed her with a strange glance of mingled ferocity, perplexity, and admiration ; for in every impulse—his anger, his avarice, and all his passions—this man was a mere animal. He took another draught of the strong schnaps, and warned her to take care what she was about, and what she did and said now ; for she was alone with one who would not stand trifling—alone in the heart of a forest where no living thing could hear her outcries but the birds in their nests, or the foxes in their holes—that she was perfectly helpless, and beyond all rescue.

Alone—and with him !

CHAPTER XI.

ULEBICK, COUNT OF MERODE.

LET us see how these two lovers conducted themselves towards the fair sisters whom they had entrapped ;—the ruffian, who was laudably ambitious of becoming a count ; and the count, who was in no way ashamed of being esteemed an accomplished ruffian.

At the narrow path indicated by Bandolo, his accomplice Bernhard had wheeled off towards the castle of Fredricksort, and its square outline, with little minarets at the angles, soon rose before the riders. High and sloping bastions faced with stone, surrounded by stockades and bristling with brass cannon, enclosed this stately castle, the lights of which were visible between the trees and plantations with which the fields were interspersed.

“ My father—my father ! ” murmured Gabrielle, whipping on her horse ; “ but where is Ernestine ? Ah, Heavens ! I do not hear the hoofs of her horse, nor those of the doctor’s nag. Ah me, if they should lose the way, and fall among Danes ! Does your master know the country well ? ”

“ Well ? none know it better between the gulf of Liim and the Elbe ; but now that we are arrived, I pray you to rein in your horse, lady, lest the sentinels fire on us.”

They were now close to the fosse, the bridge of which was drawn up ; beyond it, a deep archway yawned in the fortifications, and near it the figure of a soldier was dimly visible. He challenged in pure German.

In the same language Bernhard replied, and in her eagerness Gabrielle did so too. On hearing a woman’s voice, there was a shout of laughter from the sentinels, and from several soldiers of the barrier-guard, who were loitering at the gate, and smoking their long German pipes. The bridge was lowered, and, as soon as the travellers had crossed, it was raised again ; a lantern was brought from the guard-house, and Gabrielle found herself

surrounded by soldiers—by Merodeurs!—or the Merodistas, as the Spaniards named them—a term now synonymous with one of the greatest of human crimes—for such was the atrocious character of the regiment of Merodé.

“Merodeurs!” said Gabrielle, shrinking back on seeing the ferocious visages, the ragged uniforms, and the rusty corslets of those who surrounded her, with their features seamed by scars, bloated by beer, and their eyes expressive of the most cruel and sinister thoughts that could animate the minds of men, hardened by civil crime, by the camp and the jail, the scourge and the fetter, the riddlings of Vienna, the scum of European wars—for murderers, deserters, and vagabonds of every description, readily found pay, plunder, and service in the ranks of Merodé—where they hardened each other afresh by their ferocious example. At times they quarrelled with each other on parade, and even when before the enemy, and exchanged a few slashes and shots in the colonel’s presence. Their officers were all broken gamesters, hardened roués and high-born desperadoes; but the greatest and the worst was the count himself. Such was the battalion of Merodé; and never, perhaps, since an army was constituted, were a thousand such rascals assembled under baton, to surpass the cruelties of Nero, and disgrace the glorious profession of arms.

“Bernhard, your master told us that the castle was occupied by my father’s regiment of horse.”

But Master Bernhard did not hear Gabrielle’s expostulating tone: for having recognised several old acquaintances of the Prison-house and Rasp-haus among the Merodeurs, he was engaged in a lively conversation, the slang terms of which made it totally incomprehensible to the startled girl, who had now some secret misgivings of betrayal and misfortunes to come. However, she dismounted without assistance, and addressing one whom, by his ample scarf and boots edged with lace, she recognised to be a sergeant, said,—

“Lead me immediately to the count—for it is most improper that I should loiter here.”

“This way, then, madame,” said the halberdier, with a bow which Gabrielle mistook for politeness, as she did not perceive how he winked to one soldier, thrust his tongue in his cheek to another,

poked a third in the ribs, and set the whole guard laughing as he guided her into the body of the fortress; but she heard them saying—"Oho Kaspar! 'tis a girl who seeks the count."

"Der Teufel! ha! ha!"

"For so dainty a bird, what a taste she must have! Old Schwindler."

"I warrant me, Schwaschbücker, the count will scarcely have eyes even for so pretty a woman by this time."

"Ah, my Heavens!" sighed the poor girl, appalled by these brutal observations; "my poor father must indeed be dying, or discipline would never be so relaxed. And Ernestine—where is she loitering? Quick—quick, good sir! conduct me to the count."

The sergeant, who did not seem quite so bad as his comrades, led her straight towards a hall, the uproar proceeding from which made her poor little heart sink within her.

"Oh, if my misgivings become verified! It is impossible that my father can be in life," she thought; "if so, neither in camp nor quarters dare even the Merodeurs have been so outrageous and disorderly."

The hall was lighted, partly by flambeaux placed here and there irregularly, and partly by an enormous fire that blazed in the wide chimney, and was fed by doors and shutters, &c., brought from other parts of the edifice. The tapestry with which it was hung, and which represented the wars of Frederick II. with the Ditmarschen, was torn down in some places, leaving the bare wall exposed; in others, the fragments yet remaining were waving in the currents of air that floated through the vast apartment, and made the wavering flambeaux stream like yellow ribands.

At the long table nearly a dozen of Merodé's officers were seated at a debauch, which seemed to have lasted pretty long. All were richly, even magnificently dressed, and had their long curled hair and mustaches dressed to perfection. Their doublets, cloaks, and breeches were of the newest fashion, and of the finest Florence silk and Genoa velvet; and the enormous chains of pure gold which encircled their necks, and to which their crucifixes, miraculous medals, and jewelled poniards were attached, amply proved, that on the march they could help themselves to occasional trinkets as freely as their soldiers and camp-followers.

Many of them were noble in feature and in bearing; but recklessness, defiance, debauchery, and crime were stamped heavily and ineffaceably on every brow, and in the lack-lustre expression of every drunken eye. Those who sat by the large table were absorbed in the chances of several games—(Post-and-pair, Tric Trac, and Ombre); their minds were wholly occupied, and they were watching the turns of fortune, with their bleared and blood-shot eyes fixed on those pieces of painted pasteboard, which had already cost one of their number his life; for on the floor there lay a cavalier, whose right hand yet grasped an unsheathed rapier. Gabrielle thought him intoxicated, but a cry almost escaped her on perceiving that he was ghastly, stiff, and dead; that his unclosed eyes were turned back within their sockets, and his long fair hair was clotted by blood. Near him sat the slayer in his shirt sleeves, binding up a thrust which he had recently received in the sword arm, and whistling the while with a grim expression on his sunburnt visage. It was evident that a brawl had interrupted the gambling—that one of their number had been slain; but so intent were the Merodeurs on their favourite amusement, that they had quietly resumed their play without even removing the corpse—a terrible illustration of their reckless ferocity and familiarity with outrage.

In the dark shadow which obscured the lower end of the hall Gabrielle passed unnoticed, and her light step was unheard. From thence the halberdier conducted her along several passages, and then stopped before a door, over which swung a lamp.

“In *that* chamber you will find the count,” said he, pointing to the door.

“My father—my father!” said Gabrielle in a soft and almost breathless voice; “at last—at last—oh, my father!” she sprung forward, and, opening the door, entered the room—not, as she expected, to throw herself by the sick couch of her father, and to embrace him with all the gush of filial tenderness that welled up in her pure and joyous heart, but to find herself folded with ardour to the breast of a stranger.

“Oh, horror!” she murmured, as the light left her eyes, for she was in the arms of the terrible Ulrick, Count of Merodé!

CHAPTER XII.

PROVING THE MAXIM, THAT ADVANTAGE MAY BE TAKEN IN LOVE AS WELL AS
IN WAR.

It was some time before Gabrielle recovered from her astonishment and grief, or could fully realise all the terrors of her situation.

Merodé seated her in a chair, and closed the door. The apartment was very handsome, being completely hung with red Danish cloth, stamped over with rich silver flowers. A fire burned in an iron basket in the chimney, which was lined with gaudy Delft ware. In one corner stood a small bed, covered with green silk, brocaded with gold, and surmounted by plumes. The count's magnificently embossed helmet and cuirass hung on the knobs of one chair; his buff-coat, pistols, and rapier lay on another; and now, while the terrified Gabrielle is recovering her faculties, and surveying all these things by the light of a beautiful girandole, which occupied the centre of a small tripod table, let us take a view of the famous Ulrick.

He was about thirty-five years of age, above the middle height, and strongly made; handsome enough in face and figure to please any woman, but in his dark and devilish eye there was an expression which, while it fascinated with the fascination of fear, had that *gloating* expression, which the eye of an honest or honourable man never possesses.

His doublet of sky-blue velvet was completely covered with silver embroidery; his lace collar was a little awry, and stained with wine; his hair and mustaches were untrimmed, for he had just been awakened out of a sleep into which he had smoked himself two hours before, and his tasselled pipe still hung at a buttonhole of his doublet—the same honoured buttonhole at which he had suspended the diamond star of St. George of

Carinthia. His cloak and breeches were also of sky-blue velvet, laced with silver; he wore white buff-boots and silver spurs; a white buff-belt and diamond hilted stiletto; a white satin scarf, with a cross and eagle embroidered at the ends of it. Having slept off his first drunken nap, there was a jaunty devil-may-care expression in his face, and he regarded the young girl with a smile full of desire and admiration.

“Count of Merodé,” said she, abruptly; “is not my father with you here in Fredricksort?”

“No, Madame Gabrielle (you see I have not forgotten that name, nor the magic it once had for me), he is not. Thank Heaven! I am my own commanding-officer—at least none can have authority over me save your charming self; and I will consider it the duty and the glory of my life to obey you—to be your servant—your slave—your——”

As Merodé had all this kind of stuff off by rote, and by frequent repetition could have poured forth speeches which would fill three folio pages, Gabrielle cut him short by saying—

“I beseech you, sir, to tell me where my father is.”

“I believe the old gentleman is with the Emperor at Vienna, where I hope they are both enjoying good health.”

“Vienna! Impossible!”

“By the immortal Jove I swear to you that he is, unless—as report says—he is banished to his own castle of Giezar; for Ferdinand did not like the management of that piece of work at Oldenburg, and the escape of the count in the same ship with Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, whom he has sworn to hang (Duke and Elector though he be) over the gate of the Five Vowels at Vienna.”*

“Ah, mercy! what will become of me? Oh, Ernestine, Ernestine! where are you? why are we separated? why am I here?”

“Pon my soul, little one, by all this noise I could imagine that, like the old fellow Daniel, you had fallen into a den of lions, or among outrageous wolves, instead of a few lively young men, who can appreciate so well a pretty face. Adorable Gabrielle! I have never—never since we last saw each other at Vienna—had

* A gate of the palace, then inscribed A. E. I. O. U. meaning *Austria est imperare orbi universo*; i. e., “Austria is to govern the world.”

an opportunity of saying how much your beauty has taken possession of my whole thoughts. If I am stupid or timid just now, I pray attribute it to your presence here, which overwhelms me."

"Timidity!—I should think, my lord, you have very little of that, who have dared to entrap a daughter of Count Carlestein."

"Dared! *Der Teufel!* 'tis a word rarely addressed to a *Merodista*. (At that frightful word Gabrielle shuddered.) In love, as in war, we take all advantages; but, poor innocent! how can you be able to judge of a passion to which you must be a stranger? Yet be assured you will find love a more pleasant study than I found Latin at college; and, dearest Gabrielle, if I might be your preceptor—"

He placed both his hands on the fine figure of Gabrielle, and endeavoured to clasp her slender waist. The moment he touched her person, she drew herself up with loftiness and hauteur; her eye flashed and her cheek reddened, while a haughty indignation, which startled even Merodé, beamed on her beautiful brow.

"*Der Teufel!* but you *are* enchanting!" said Merodé, stepping back a space and surveying her with all the air of a profound connoisseur. "'Pon my soul, little one, I like you all the better for this display of temper; you shall see how friendly we shall be by and by. Believe me, I have not the least feeling of revenge for all the contempt with which you treated me at Vienna—not the least. Ah, by my life, what a charming pout!"

"I will leave this place, and go to my sister. Oh! Ernestine, where are you, and why are you not here to protect me?"

"She is in very good keeping by this time; and 'tis well, for she is a little bit of an *Amazon*," said Merodé, somewhat maliciously; for he knew right well that she was to become the prey of Bandolo.

"Count," said Gabrielle, clasping her poor little hands, and approaching with a trembling heart and imploring eyes; "by all the mercies of Heaven, I conjure you to tell me what you mean!"

"Delicious Gabrielle!" murmured the count, looking at her from side to side as one would do a fine horse; "why, I merely mean that she is safe among the Lutheran nuns of St. Kund at Kiel, where some of my fellows are very anxious to pay a visit."

"On your honour, count, you assure me of this?"

"On my soul I do!" replied Merodé, for that he considered of infinitely less importance.

Though thankful for the imaginary safety of her sister, Gabrielle, being overcome by the desolation and dangers of her position, sank into a chair and covered her face with her hands. Without touching her, Merodé hung over the chair, and gazed at the beautiful and harmonious outline of her young bust and curved shoulder; and thought, that although there was every chance of old Carlstein putting a bullet through his head, *sans* parley or ceremony, on the first opportunity, the pleasure he now experienced was well worth the risk to be run.

"Why so very sad?" said he, after a pause; "I don't comprehend it. Really I must have a rival, and that is the most troublesome animal a lover can have in his way. Now, pretty one, say—have I?"

"You have none here, at all events," sobbed Gabrielle, a little spitefully.

"Then I can have none any where else," replied the count, twirling his enormous Austrian mustache. "You charm me more and more! and has no man ever said that he loved you?"

Ian's stately figure seemed to rise at these words, and as the young maiden thought of her modest, her hopeless, and secret love, she could only weep.

Merodé uttered a deep sigh, which had its origin in art, rather than purity of passion; for that was a purity which the heart of Merodé never knew.

"Ah, Gabrielle, you do look seducing at this moment! Those dear white hands—and beautiful tears," he resumed, attempting to place an arm round her.

"For the love of Heaven, Count Merodé, do not touch me!" implored Gabrielle, in a voice so tender that he withdrew his arm, and stammered out—

"Der Teufel! Faith, I always thought that girls preferred a brisk and toying lover to a man who made long faces and long speeches. To-night I see that nothing can be achieved—not even the smallest caress. To-morrow we shall be better friends. 'Tis always thus with little ones like you. They make a devil of a fuss at first; and, from hating me alone, I have

known twenty girls come at last to love the whole regiment, from right flank to left—positively! Pray, do not get into a passion with a poor Pickle like me, who fires off whatever ammunition comes first to hand; and so now I will leave you, and go to supper with my *bon camarados* in the hall. In these matter-of-fact days, my pretty one, love—however strong—cannot subsist without plenty to eat and drink," continued Merodé, rising and bowing, as he slowly retired towards the door. "We should grow sad if we did not drink; we should die if we did not eat. Now, were I a young damsel, I would always choose a lover who had a good appetite and loved his can of wine; for he that does so, is sure to be a strong and healthy fellow, with good sense, a good heart, and a good pair of sturdy legs; and what more would the most fastidious lady, even the Lady Margarethe of Skofgaard, or the Empress herself, require? What—you are still angry and perverse; and your father will have me broken alive upon the wheel, will he? No—no—I am sure he could never be such a hard-hearted old crocodile. But good-night, dearest Gabrielle; I will send you a companion—the best of many we have here in Fredricksort; but, until to-morrow, I will not trouble you again."

He retired, and closed the door.

For a time Gabrielle remained buried in the most tormenting thoughts, and shedding a torrent of tears.

Near the elegant couch already described, a door opened softly; but not so softly as to be unheard by Gabrielle. She turned with eyes expressive of alarm, and a lady stood before her.

It was the señora Prudentia—the Spanish dancer, whom Gabrielle had seen charming thousands in the theatre of Vienna; but whom, of course, she did not recognise in her Spanish costume, and with a face so pale—for excesses of many kinds had robbed the fair actress of many of her charms since she had made such a blockhead of me when in garrison at Glückstadt; but still she was beautiful, and her deep, dark, and magnificent eyes were fixed on Gabrielle, with a smile so lively and seducing that she was quite charmed. Rejoiced to see one of her own sex, she sprang towards her, and said—

"Ah, madame, you will protect me, will you not?"

“ Protect you from what—from whom? There is no danger here,” said Prudentia, kissing the soft white cheek of Gabrielle, who threw herself into her arms. Her pretty foreign accent gave a girlish simplicity to all the señora said.

“ Do not leave me, and I shall love you!” exclaimed Gabrielle.

“ Upon my honour, child, you are beautiful!” said the dancer (who was her senior by a year or two), holding Gabrielle at arm’s length, and surveying her timid face and fine figure;—“ you are perfectly beautiful!”

“ And so are you,” said the poor little captive, with the most perfect innocence; “ but you will be kind to me, will you not? Oh, yes!—for you have eyes just like my dear sister. And you will set me free?”

“ Free—for what?” laughed the dancer; “ is not one much better here?”

“ In this frightful place! Are you the wife of Count Merodé? I hope you are not—I should be so sorry if one so pretty—”

“ No, I am called the Señora Prudentia,” replied the dancer with a loud laugh.

“ Prudentia!” said Gabrielle, musing; “ I have surely heard that name before. There was a dancer so called in Vienna—a Spaniard. Six months ago there was a brawl in her house, and an officer of Camargo’s regiment was murdered. The woman had to fly.”

“ I have heard of it,” replied Prudentia, who was the identical personage referred to, and had then around her graceful neck and tapered wrists the jewels given to her by the murdered man, who had fallen beneath her brother’s poniard—a catastrophe which had banished her from Vienna for ever, though it was no blemish in the eyes of Merodé and his officers, to the female staff of whose regiment she had attached herself. “ She was a countrywoman of mine—but a mere dancer,” said Prudentia, with a toss of her pretty head; “ we know that persons of that profession are all alike.”

“ It was very horrid—it was infamous!”

Prudentia gave the unconscious girl a spiteful glance from the corners of her dark eyes.

"Ah! madame, when shall I leave this place—when will you set me free?"

"Foolish child! it is for your own good you are brought here. The count is gallant, rich, generous, and will make up for the fortune your father is about to lose; for, although no one has been found murdered in *his* bedroom, he has fallen into disgrace with the Emperor. I am sure Merodé is very loveable. He will give you the most magnificent dresses—with flowers and diamonds for your hair, jewels and circlets for your neck and arms; a gilded caleche and six white horses with switching tails if you wish them, for in this place he has half the spoil of South Juteland."

"Oh, that I was out of it!" said Gabrielle, wringing her hands in bewilderment, and abandoning herself to the most violent grief. "Ernestine! Ernestine! why do you not come to me? I will be destroyed here. Madame, my father will give you all you have enumerated, and a thousand doubloons to boot, if you will set me free."

"I am not mistress here, any more than yourself," replied Prudentia, with a cold smile.

There was a pause, during which nothing was heard but the sobs of Gabrielle, and distant din of roistering in the hall, where Merodé and his officers were drinking and gambling like mad ruffians, as they were; and the roar of mingled laughter, with the clatter of drinking-horns, came on the currents of air through the long echoing corridors of the old Danish fortress.

"Oh!" moaned Gabrielle, covering her fine blue eyes with her hands; "I wish that some great illness would come and kill me."

"What a foolish wish!" retorted Prudentia; "upon my word, girl, I believe you are just what I was at your age—dying for a husband. But come with me to my room; by this time, Merodé, who with all his generosity is a mere *sot* at night—a regular *borracho*—will not trouble us until to-morrow——"

"But his comrades?"

"They dare not cast even an insolent glance upon the lady-friends of their commander—so come with me, and rest assured that, until morning at least, you are safe."

This was the truth. Gabrielle declined all refreshment, though offered every delicacy by Prudentia. She was permitted to pass that night unmolested; and, though she could not by any means be prevailed upon to undress, shared the sleeping-place of one from whose touch—had she known all—she would have shrunk as from contamination.

The Spanish danzador went through the ceremony (a somewhat useless one for her), of telling her beads before retiring to repose; but Gabrielle, who knelt by her side, clasped her little white hands, and, from her pure and virgin heart, addressed to Heaven one of those deep and voiceless prayers, which are all the more deep and fervent because the lips cannot utter them.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WHITE POWDER.

WHILE these little matters were occurring at his Danish majesty's castle of Fredricksort, Ernestine was still at the sequestered cottage in the wood; the old hag was yet skinning her squirrels in a corner of the chimney; the oil lamp was yet shedding its sickly gleam to the pale face of Ernestine, on the coal black hair, the rattlesnake eyes, and ferocious mouth of Bandolo, who had imbibed many a draught of schnaps, slightly tinctured with water. He was still awed by the presence of her he had dared to decoy by an artful story; thus his love affair had not made much progress.

Had Gabrielle fallen into the hands of Bandolo, she had been inevitably lost; for the extreme buoyancy and girlishness of her nature would have been totally overcome by terror. But Ernestine, with all her sweetness, retained that majestic calmness and admirable self-possession which dazzled and confounded this man of a hundred crimes. She awed him by her placid dignity—even as still waters awe us by their depth, more than the turbulent and shallow. Yet in her inmost heart Ernestine deplored with voiceless bitterness her irreparable folly, in committing herself without my advice to the guidance of a perfect stranger; though that stranger had presented himself at Falster as the count's accredited messenger. But now the danger which she was certain must beset Gabrielle, gave her a desperate courage.

“Heaven—blessed heaven!” said she, clasping her hands and raising her fine eyes; “hast thou abandoned me!”

“Por el Santo nombre de Dios!” cried the Spaniard, with a hoarse laugh; “what the d—l! do you think that Heaven cares about all your little piques and perversities. Heaven would indeed have plenty to do if it attended to all the nonsense of

women. Have done with ha's and oh's, and listen to me. I remember a time when I was ass enough to starve and scourge myself in the forty days of Lent, to make up for my enormities during the Neapolitan carnival—but, faith ! I am wiser now, and St. Mary—”

“ Wretch, name her not !”

“ Well, if I am such a rascal that your precious saints will not interest themselves in my affairs, I must just have recourse to the schnaps in the first place, and the devil in the second—ha! ha! What a hen-hearted fellow I am to sit here all night without having one kiss from you ! Trumpery ! I am turning a cowardly blunderbuss, like Bernhard ; and now, when I think of it, I wonder why that schwindler tarries with my thousand ducats. Lady,” continued this ogre, with a ghastly leer ; “ I am rich. In this mail are bills on the Imperial treasury, and gold to the value of a hundred thousand dollars—the fruits of many years of valour and industry.”

“ Murder and espionage.”

“ Call it what you will—call it what you will ! With that sum I can purchase a county, either in Germany or Naples, and thou shalt share that county with me.”

Ernestine almost uttered a scornful laugh.

“ Twill be a glorious revenge upon that haughty noble, who, when caprioling through the streets of Vienna with all his waving feathers and plates of polished steel, rode over me near the palace gate, and passed on without pity, because I was Bandolo—twill be a glorious vengeance, I say, when this man, Rupert Count of Carlstein, Lord of Giezar and Koeniggratz, has to greet me as his son-in-law—ha! ha!” He attempted to take in his the hand of Ernestine.

“ For the sake of Heaven, do not sully me by your touch !”

“ Beware, lest by haughty words and scornful glances you turn my softness to anger ; my love to hatred ; my persuasions to that violence which I may put in force when I choose ; and thus, in grim earnest, sully the illustrious blood of Carlstein—ha! ha! *Sully*, I think, was the term you used, lady—as if the blood in one body was better, or purer, or more divine, than the blood in another.”

Full of scorn and fear, Ernestine gazed at him as she would have gazed at a serpent. Anger and horror alternately rendered her silent and motionless. At times she could scarcely believe that all she saw and heard was real—that she was so completely in the power of this man, the touch of whose hand—that hand so often dipped in human blood—struck a chill through her. Was she really awake? Was it not all a hideous dream, from which she would awake to find herself by her sister's side, in their little bed-chamber at Nyekiobing?

“Mercy on me!” she thought wildly; “to what a fate am I exposed! Here, without a hope, without a chance of escape, but by death—and not even by that, for I am without a poniard. Oh, wretch! would that I could find one, either for myself or for thee!”

Bandolo, who sat on the top of his precious mail, which he had placed upon a stool, swung his legs to and fro, laughed boisterously as the schnaps mounted to his brain; for she had uttered the last wish aloud.

“Bandolo—man—monster! what wrong have I ever done you, that you should persecute me thus?”

“You have not done any thing, but your father has. He rode me down in the streets of Vienna; and the man you love has, for he defeated and disgraced me at Glückstadt. He has stabbed and discovered me in various disguises; and, by robbing him of *you*, I rob him of that which he prizes more than his miserable life, which I could have taken by a pistol-shot at any time—ha! ha! So do not talk in that way again, my bride, or, zounds! I will come and kiss you.”

Terrified by this threat, Ernestine remained silent for a time.

He uttered a succession of savage chuckles; then whistled a bolero, and resumed his swinging to and fro on the stool and his beloved portmanteau, eyeing his prisoner all the time as a cat does a mouse.

“Bandolo—Herr or Señor—for I know not by which to address you,” said Ernestine; “you are said to love gold as a fish loves water, or flowers the sun.”

“As flowers love water, or a fish the sun—what a fine simile!

ha! ha!" said Bandolo, who was rapidly becoming tipsy; "Well—what if I do?"

"Conduct me to the nearest Austrian garrison, and I will see that you are paid a thousand ducats in gold."

"Bah!" said he; "I have just sold your sister for that very sum."

"My sister—my sister!" reiterated Ernestine in a breathless voice—"to whom?"

"The virtuous and honourable Count of Merodé."

At this cruel reply, the heart of Ernestine ceased to beat, and a palsy seemed to shake her beautiful form. A glazed expression stole over the ferocious eyes of Bandolo; they seemed to roll on vacancy, and the terror of Ernestine was redoubled.

"Gold—yes, gold!" he muttered; "when gold is spread before me, when a poniard is in my hand, I am mad! I am no longer myself! Something like a red curtain descends between me and the sun, bathing in redness all before my eyes. A hand passes over my heart—there is a whisper in my ears; it is destroy—destroy and be rich! Then I can see nothing before me, above me, and below me, but blood—red blood in pouring torrents, but spotted with sparkling stars; these stars are coins—they are gold—yellow gold—they are the price of my soul! Every deed I have done—every deed I am yet to do—even the murder of thee, perhaps, all beautiful as thou art—was written down ages before I was born, and they were all foretold to me by an old gitana of Arragon. Oh, yes! I remember that night in the wood near Almudevar. The wind was still, and the red sheet lightning was reddening the midnight sky, behind Huesca and the spire of San Lorenzo. We sat near the margin of the Gallego, and a thousand cork-trees hung their branches over its stupendous torrent, the roar of which shook the earth beneath our feet, yet not even the smallest of their leaves was stirring. I remember yet the solemn stillness of the wood, and roaring fury of the torrent, but I heard only the voice of the old gitana; and she foretold how, wading through a sea of crime, I should wed the daughter of a valiant noble, and die rich, powerful, feared, and respected; and the hour is at hand for accomplishing the first part of my destiny—for turning the first leaf in the great book of my fate. I am not drunk—Maldicion de Dios—no!" he continued,

rolling his head from side to side; "do I speak like a man who is so?"

Ernestine turned anxiously and hopelessly to the old woman; but Dame Krümpel had fallen asleep by the dying embers, and lay half reclined against the fireplace, with a knife in one hand, and a half-skinned squirrel in the other; and while Bandolo had run on thus concerning the gitana, her prophecy and his fate, a sickness, the very sickness of intense fear, came over Ernestine. She bent her head upon her hand, but still continued to watch him between her white fingers. Suddenly the wretched cottage seemed to swim around her; and she felt herself sinking.

"Blessed Heaven!" she prayed, "preserve me from the deadly faintness that is coming over me!"

"The bottle of kirschwasser is rather nearer you than heaven," said Bandolo, pouring some of the cherry-wine into the two tin-cups which were on the table. Ernestine, who thought it might revive and strengthen her for what she might have yet to encounter, made no objection; but while watching Bandolo between the pretty fingers which shaded her eyes, she perceived him hastily shake a little *white powder* into one of the cups! Instead of increasing her terror, this gave her a new and sudden courage, and she immediately conceived a bold and decisive project, for my brave Ernestine had a man's head with all her woman's heart.

She cared not whether the drugged cup contained merely a narcotic or a deadlier draught. In either case she knew that it was meant for her, with some terrible ulterior object—and that the cup was full of peril; hence she resolved that it should be drunk by Bandolo himself.

"Drink with me," said he; "you cannot refuse me that. To our better acquaintance, lady sweetheart—and to your better humour—ha! ha!"

Gathering all her energies, she uttered a shrill cry of alarm, and exclaimed—

"See—see—what is that at the window?"

Dame Krümpel sprang to her slipshod feet. Bandolo grasped a pistol, rushed to the lattice, and, pressing his nose against it, peered out into the darkness of the forest, and at that instant

Ernestine set down her drugged cup of the kirschwasser, and took up *his*.

"No one is there—por el nombre de Dios, *if there was!*" growled Bandolo grinding his teeth as he uncocked his pistol, and for a moment became almost sobered; while the beldam in the corner snorted herself asleep again. "Hoity, toity, my poor little Tit—'tis only your perverse fancy! Come, drink with me; this cup of cherry-water will brace your nerves, and set all right in heart and head—it will, by the henckers! (I am half German, you see—even as you are half Spaniard;) ha! ha! Come, my bride—let us clink our cans and be merry."

With a pale and trembling hand Ernestine raised the cup in the old German fashion, clinked it side by side, above and below, with the drugged cup of the subtle but unconscious bravo, and then drained its contents. He gave her a long stare of triumph and derision; then burst into a loud laugh, and drank off his wine at one gulp.

He then set down the cup, and while continuing to look at Ernestine with a leering expression, broke into a German drinking song which he had heard among Tilly's Reitres, and, mingling with it scraps of a Spanish gipsy ballad, rolled his head from side to side with a wild expression of face, that increased every moment.

The song died away in quavering murmurs on his lips; once or twice he raised his hands, but they fell heavily by his side.

Then it seemed suddenly to flash upon his mind, the faculties of which were fast obscuring, that he had drunk of the wrong cup; and the smile of bitter triumph that curled the beautiful lip of Ernestine, and the wonder that sparkled in her haughty eyes, convinced him that it was so!

"Ah, traitress—that cry—you have outwitted me! I thought you had swallowed this drug—it now spreads a drowsy numbness over every limb. Traitors—ass that I am—I have fallen into my own trap—I have drugged myself—she will escape! Maldicion—de—de—Maldetto! By the henckers; I will put a ball through you—I will—I will!"

Erecting himself on his feet, where he swayed to and fro like a figure on a pivot, he endeavoured to grasp Ernestine; but she started back.

At that moment his aspect was frightful.

Inflamed by passion and desire, ferocity and revenge, his features were alternately brightened by a wild leer, or contracted and savage. His eyes were glittering with that white ghastly glare which some Spanish eyes can alone assume; and, balancing himself on each leg alternately, he approached the bold but startled girl, while his hands wandered nervously among the weapons in his belt. Suddenly he fell prostrate, speechless, and almost unable to move; but his glaring eyes—still fixed on Ernestine—shewed that, though the drugged kirschwasser had fettered every limb, his senses had not yet left him.

“And this would have been my situation!” thought Ernestine, with a heart full of horror.

Stooping down, she deliberately, but not without a shudder, drew from his belt four pistols and threw away the priming, and took possession of his poniard, which she placed in her girdle—uttering a joyful laugh, for she knew that *her* moment for triumph had come. If Bandolo’s eyes could have slain, at that crisis their glare would have immolated her. She was about to rush from the cottage when another thought occurred to her; and grasping the heavy portmanteau, which contained all Bandolo’s vast amount of treasury bills and gold—that gold which the perpetration of a hundred complicated crimes had amassed and enabled him to hoard up, like the very blood of his heart—she shook it tauntingly before his fixed and frenzied eyes, and, rejoicing that she could thus rob the robber, issued from the cottage with the intention of throwing the ponderous mail into the first deep well she came to, that the price of blood might be lost to men for ever.

As she disappeared, a cry almost left the paralysed tongue of Bandolo, on seeing all the fruit of his crimes and avarice vanishing into smoke, together with the prophecy of the gitana and his hopes of a count’s coronet; and as he sank lower and lower upon the clay floor, and the power of a narcotic that was to last for six-and-thirty hours spread over him, the tramp of a horse’s hoofs receding into the distant paths of the wood, were the last sounds he heard; and they informed him, that his beautiful prisoner and his beloved gold were gone together.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NUNS OF ST. KNUD.

NOTWITHSTANDING the wildness of her terror, Ernestine, who was a bold and expert horsewoman, retained sufficient presence of mind to select her own nag, to give a glance at the saddle, and before mounting to throw the mail with all its contents into the deep tarn that lay before the cottage-door. Relieved of this encumbrance, and feeling that she had revenged herself, she dashed at full speed along the same path by which they had come; and though she frequently paused to listen, and cry aloud the name of her sister, in the hope that she might be in her vicinity, the echoes alone replied.

A torrent of tears again came to her relief; her hat flew off, and with all her loosened hair streaming behind her, in such a manner that it frequently became twisted among the branches of the trees, she urged on her horse by the unsparing use of the whip at the bridle-end. All the energy and courage that the presence of immediate danger had summoned, and which had enabled Ernestine to conduct herself so stoutly and so well throughout the trying events of the evening and night, were now passing away, and she could only weep and murmur the name of her sister.

She had left the wood far behind her, and was now in the open country, where all was still and solemn; and, as she had long since committed the bridle to the care of her horse, on recovering sufficiently she found that he had slackened his pace, and commenced cropping the long grass that grew by the wayside.

She looked around, and began to reflect on the many terrors and peculiarities of her situation.

The moon was waning, and its pale white disc was slowly sinking behind the flat shore of Eckernfiörd, and the long shadows of every tree and hedge were thrown far across the fallow and neglected fields. All was quiet and voiceless as a vast burial-

ground. There was no house near. Without money, jewels, or friends, she was alone in a land where the rough, morose, and uncultivated boors were jealous of all strangers, and unmerciful to the straggling Imperialists, whom they slew without mercy wherever they met them. Her mind became filled with new alarms, and the poor girl knew not which way to turn for succour or for protection.

Bandolo had spoken of having sold her sister to Merodé, who occupied Fredicksort. She shuddered at the idea of Merodé and his officers, but her first thought was to seek that fortress; then she paused. Should her sister really be there, she could only hope to achieve her freedom by being herself free. To visit Fredicksort might be to become also a prisoner; besides, bad as Merodé was, Gabrielle might be safer with him than she could have been with Bandolo. Where now were all their father's rank and power, when the debauched Merodé, and Tilly's ruffian follower, dared to commit the acts they had done? Her mind became a prey to the most bitter anguish. Then came other ideas; for as the white moon disappeared, and inky blackness stole over the darkened sea and level landscape, her German education brought many a strange and wild story to her memory, and made her tremble as she watched the quaint, fantastic shapes assumed by every object between her and the distant horizon, where, rising from a black and strongly defined outline, there shone a pallid flush of light, but silvery and uncertain, the last rays of the moon that had waned; and she was weak enough to fear that a swarm of little Trolds might surround her; for, unlike the beautiful and merry little fairies of our Scottish traditions, those of Denmark are impish, heavy, and ungainly gnomes, with hump-backs and long hook-noses, wearing grey doublets and conical red caps; but, as the land was moorish and level, she feared still more to meet with some of the *Elle people*, who are usually said to dwell in such places, and whose touch causes a wasting that ends in death.

While these thoughts crowded through her mind, and mingled with her more solid causes of grief and terror, she suddenly found herself beneath the walls of a high square building, surrounded by a number of copper beeches and tall poplars.

Not without some fear that it might prove the castle of Grön

Jette, or King Waldemar the wild huntsman, and consequently that it might vanish at her touch, she approached the arched gateway and raised the knocker, which was of good substantial iron, and rang heavily. She knocked repeatedly without receiving any answer, and her heart beat with increased rapidity. After a time she heard the sound of voices within, and thanked Heaven to find them all belonging to females. One named Grethe was frequently summoned.

“Grethe! Grethe!—where are you, Grethe?”

Grethe, who proved to be the old portress of this edifice, which in former times had been a Catholic convent, dedicated to St. Knud, but was now an establishment of Lutheran nuns, opened the gate, and uttered a cry on beholding the pale face, the long black hair, the wild and disordered expression of Ernestine.

“An Elle woman!” she exclaimed; “an Elle woman from the moor!”

Half sinking with emotion and fatigue, Ernestine slipped from her saddle, and entered among the nuns, who received her with wonder and fear, but with kindness, on finding that she was a mortal like themselves, and neither an Elle woman nor one of the *Stille Volk* (the silent people), spirits who appear to give warning of approaching danger.

The kind Danish ladies (whose superior was a daughter of the old Baron Fœyœ) conveyed Ernestine into the parlour of the establishment, where they had all been assembling previous to morning prayers. Refreshments were brought, and her story heard. Notwithstanding that she was a daughter of one of those Imperialists who were carrying war and desolation to the heart of Denmark, she was treated with the most sisterly kindness.

The lady superior left nothing undone or unsaid to reassure Ernestine, and promised that with dawn every means should be taken to trace her sister. The Lutheran nuns did not conceal their satisfaction at having within their walls a daughter of the great Imperialist, Count Carlstein, colonel-general of the cavalry, fully believing that her presence would protect them from any of the unscrupulous Merodeurs, who occupied the castle of Fredericksort, a few miles distant.

These kind sisters did all in their power to comfort Ernestine;

but every thing in their establishment excited her surprise, being so different from the Catholic convents of the empire. Instead of the long flowing robe, the wimple, veil, and hood, they wore the dress of the world, and had ample fardingales, with starched collars and bands, puffs, cuffs, ruffs, and all the newest fashions of France.

Ernestine expressed her astonishment at this, and said she could not believe them to be nuns in sober earnest.

"Why so, child?" retorted the Lady Foye; "is it because we dress like other women of the present day, and do not make our piety to consist in the modish garments of a bygone age, like the religious of your empire?"

"I crave your pardon, mother," said Ernestine, gently; "but it seems so strange to me—and your vows——"

"Vow me no vows!" replied the lady; "we are all daughters of the best families in Denmark, and only remain here so long as we please, consequently we do not require vows to restrain our inclinations to evil."

Ernestine had no wish to offend the kind superior, by instituting comparisons between her establishment and those which she considered more perfect, and consequently remained silent.

She was three days with the nuns of St. Knud. As it was the rule of these Lutheran establishments that the sisters should sleep by pairs, Ernestine slept with one of them. Each couple had their little dormitory and working-room, where they made clothes for the poor, drew landscapes and pious pictures without number, representing the miracles of St. Knud, and the spiders spinning their webs over that hole in which he concealed himself from the Wends, who, deceived by the appearance of the gossamer web, believed there was no one within, and prosecuted their search elsewhere; others painted on velvet, or made flowers and ornaments for sale; in short, nothing could be more blameless and amiable than the tenor of their way.

They had a chapel, having a crucifix, altar, and candles, where the village curate gave them a sermon twice every week; though the crucifix and other et cetera are at variance with the catechism of Martin Luther, as printed at Kiobenhafen in 1666.

The nun who shared her bed and apartment with Ernestine,

was a very pretty and fair-haired girl, the youngest daughter of the old Count of Rantzau. Sister Gunhilda informed her, in that solemn confidence which the circumstance of being bedfellows establishes at once between young girls, that she was only residing in this tiresome convent until the close of the weary war would permit the Baron Karl of Klosterfiörd to leave his troop of pistoliers for a few months and marry her; and no sooner did she ascertain that Ernestine had once seen her dear Karl, than she overwhelmed her with questions as to what he said and did; and whether his air was not noble, his voice the most pleasant, his mustaches the most captivating, and his figure the most handsome, she had ever met with.

To find nuns so impatient for marriage, and speaking of it quite as an occurrence of their everyday life, was a fresh source of wonder to poor Ernestine.

During the three days she was with them, no tidings could be learned of Gabrielle; for as the sentinels of Merodé at Fredricksort invariably shot every Dane who approached their posts, the boors were too wary to trust themselves within a mile of the Imperial quarters.

Another day would have found her despairing and inconsolable, had not an unexpected visitor arrived at the convent. This was no other than Father d'Eydel (or Daidle, which you please), the Jesuit, who had just made his escape from the uproar and carnage of Eckernfiörd, where he had been with the Imperial garrison, the story of whose destruction he related.

Ernestine received him almost with joy, and wept upon his hand; the Lutheran abbess and her ladies received him with hospitality and respect, though the good man certainly cut a very remarkable figure for a follower of St. Ignatius Loyola. He had escaped from Eckernfiörd just as he had sprung out of bed, i. e. in his shirt and drawers; and he had picked up and donned a drummer's doublet, which was covered with tawdry lace, and was too small for him. Thus his long and bony arms protruded far through the sleeves, while the short tails were dangling high up between his shoulders; and on his head was a broad plaited straw hat, such as the peasant women wore; and these garments, when his severely solemn face, and long lean figure, thrust

into a pair of tight flannel drawers, are taken into account; made him much more comical than reverend in aspect. Even his own brother, the dominie, would not have recognised him. He had no sooner consoled Ernestine (who was his favourite), and recovered from his fatigue and general discomposure, than, without doffing the drummer's yellow doublet, with its tags of scarlet lace, he turned his grave grey eyes upon the Lady Foeyce, and asked her if she was not ashamed of the frippery exhibited by the ladies of her establishment.

"I ask you, madame—for reverend mother I cannot call you—if all this pinning and unpinning, combing, and brushing, and other looking-glass work—this ado with corsets and carcanets, busks and boddices, bracelets and borders,—these partlets and friglets, kirtles and fardingales,—this concatenation of trumpery and trash, are becoming women who retire from the world as sisters of St. Knud? Alas! it was neither velvet nor satin, purple nor fine linen, that were worn in better times by the true sisters of that blessed saint, who gathered the rich harvest of conversion among the Danish isles, in those dark ages when, at the sound of his inspired voice, the vanities and atrocities of the Eleusynian rites fled and disappeared—when the fires of superstition were quenched, and the blood of the human sacrifice was dried on the stone of Odin, never to stain it more. Their garments were of sackcloth, their hoods and wimples the fruits of their own industry. But you, madame, and these around you—oh, get you gone! for all this frippery is enough to bring the vengeance of Heaven, if it does not bring the Merodeurs among you!"

He said a great deal more to the same purpose, and wound up his discourse by almost convincing the poor harmless women that they were thoroughly disreputable, and a mere society of sinners; but in the midst of his harangue Gunhilda of Rantzau whispered to Ernestine, that she was now convinced the convent was not a proper place for her, and more than ever wished that her dear Karl would come and take her away.

On questioning the Jesuit concerning the troops who had made the midnight attack on Eckernfjord, he happened to mention to Ernestine our regiment of Strathnaver, having seen the tartans waving, and heard the pipes braying, as we defiled in

close column through the main street to assail the great church. Filled by new fears and anxieties, Ernestine determined to seek the battalion, and discover me, if I had not fallen in the night attack, "which," as Father d'Eydel said, "was not improbable, for I saw the poor Scottish lads lying across each other on the causeway, like fish in a net."

Her new terrors were irrepressible. With daybreak she set out on horseback, riding on a pillion behind the priest, who was disguised as a layman, in a dress given to him by the Lady Fœyœ, who received in return a protection for all her establishment, written in strong terms, and running in the name of Count Tilly.

An hour's riding brought him and Ernestine to Eckernförd, where every thing bore terrible witness of the recent conflict; the burned and ruined houses; the church razed to its foundations; the streets strewed with wounded, with killed, and spotted by gouts of blood; with spent cannon-shot and exploded bombs; while the blackened wrecks of the storeship, lay half-burned and stranded on the sandy shore. Others had gone down at their anchors when the flames had reached the water edge. Thus the harbour, which yesterday had presented a fair and busy scene, was now desolate and empty, or covered with scorched timber and floating corpses.

It happened luckily that Angus Roy M'Alpine, with his company, guarded the gate which faces the road from Kiel; and he sent a Highland soldier to conduct Ernestine and the Jesuit to a house, where I and several others had been carried, for the purpose of being examined by the chirurgeon to the forces—the famous Dr. Alexander Pennicuik of that Ilk, who afterwards was chirurgeon-general to Sir John Banier in Germany.

I need not expatiate on the emotions of poor Ernestine, when she beheld me lying in a stupor of pain and exhaustion, on a little straw spread on the floor of this temporary hospital, with a plaid rolled up and placed under my head for a pillow, and a dead soldier on each side of me; for many a poor fellow expired of agony or loss of blood before their wounds could be attended to, in the bustle and excitement succeeding the desperate business of the night attack.

CHAPTER XV.

COMFORTS OF WAR.

STRUCK senseless by a piece of falling timber, as I have related, I lay in a state of blessed unconsciousness of the horrors and of the carnage around me; but I can still remember the gradual struggling back to life again, and a partial relapse into insensibility—a vibrating of the pendulum, as it were, between life and inanity, while many a strange vision floated around me.

My home came before me, and the pleasant voices of other days were in my ears, mingling with the hum of bees, and the rustling leaves of my native forests. I wept with joy to find my feet again on the purple heather—again on Scottish earth; but that joy was tinged with fear and doubt, lest the vision would pass away; for the distant and the present—the past and the future—were conflicting for place and coherence in my mind. I beheld my own home, and the roof beneath which my mother bore me into this world of sorrow; the morning sun seemed to redden the walls of the old grey tower, that rose above the woods of Scottish pine; its dun smoke was curling in the pure air of the mountains. Then methought I was at sea in a small shallop, and I felt the waters heaving beneath me. The Sutors of Cromartie, whose ivied fronts of rock—the home of the seabird—guard the *Portus Salutis* of the ancients, rose before me, with their bases wreathed in surf; mists came around me; the shore receded, and I felt myself alone on the ocean. Farther and farther the boat went seaward, and the shore diminished to a speck. I was feeble and unable to use hand or voice, and I felt that the moment was approaching when I would perish, and the waters close over me.

Then the current of the tide seemed to turn again; the boat was wafted slowly towards the shore; emotions of joy and pain

arose within me; old voices came to my ear, and among them were the soft tones of Ernestine. I strove to speak, but my tongue was feeble and fettered; and I tried vainly to embrace her through the mist that enveloped us.

Her voice became more distinct—the shore was very close then; the visionary boat grounded; I felt her hands upon me, and awoke from a stupor, to find myself in the military hospital of Eckernförd, with Ernestine kneeling beside me, pale as death—pale as the dead soldiers near us; but bathing my temples with some cool and aromatic essence.

Now, I have no doubt that the imaginary shore from which I seemed to recede, and again approached, was this world; and that in reality my spirit hovered between time and eternity; for, as Doctor Pennicuik informed me afterwards, the contusion on my head, notwithstanding my bonnet of steel, was a very severe one, being upon the very place where I was struck before.

The dead, half stripped, with eyes unclosed and glazed, and with their coagulated blood forming black pools among the straw on which they lay, were stretched at intervals between the wounded and dying. One of the former was a muscular Highlander from the braes of Lochaber, whose breast was gored by three pike wounds; another, close by me also, was a handsome young chevalier of Montgomerie's French musketeers, whose head had been partially fractured by a spirole shot, and his brains were actually oozing over his eyes.

Father d'Eydel had taken off his masquerading doublet, tucked up his shirt sleeves, and like a thoroughly good, but somewhat long-legged and long-armed Samaritan, was dressing wounds and bruises, tying up cuts and slashes, distributing food, refreshments, clean shirts, and dry straw, with a celerity that made old Pennicuik of that Ilk, our chirurgeon-general, declare him well worth a dozen of doctors.

A bed being found for me in an adjacent house, Ian and Phadrig Mhor took me up between them, as if I had been a child, and conveyed me there. Being anxious to have some conversation with Ernestine, I would not permit them to undress me, but lay on the mattress in my doublet and kilt, with a plaid spread over me; and after kind old Sandy Pennicuik

(afterwards chief *Medico* to the Scottish army which invaded England) had dressed my wound, the dear girl was permitted to visit me for a half hour, during which she gave me a brief sketch of her adventures; but, to avoid agitating me unnecessarily, concealed for the present the mystery which involved the fate of Gabrielle.

The half hour during which we were permitted to be alone, passed like a minute; and yet the excitement of it nearly put me into a fever. In fact, Pennicuik fully expected that it would do so; but believed, as he afterwards said, that if the interview was withheld, a fever from vexation might prove more fatal. We embraced each other repeatedly, with that full and impassioned tenderness which the dangers we had both encountered and escaped, and the separation we had endured, made more endearing to us than ever.

For a time we could do nothing but sigh and utter tender appellations, which would seem very droll even to lovers if transferred to paper; although, moreover, none but lovers could understand them.

"Ah! these wars are frightful!" said poor Ernestine, when she had related all her escapes, and heard all mine. "On one side, I tremble for the loss of my father; on the other, for the loss of you."

"But weep no more, Ernestine; a happy time is in store for us all."

"For such scenes as these—for this town with its shattered walls and corpse-strewn streets—you have left those quiet glens and silent hills, of which I have heard my poor father often speak with so much rapture and regret."

"Ay, Ernestine," said I; "but on those blue hills, where the mountain bee sucks the honey from the purple heath, and the white butterfly floats over the yellow broom bells; and in those green glens, where the hirsels graze and the sheep bleat by the whimpling burn, or the smoke of the sequestered cottage ascends through the summer woods—the din of war is often heard, and the gleds and corbies are summoned to a feast from the four winds of heaven. The cross of fire gleams across the country, flung from hand to hand; the war-piper rings from the echoing rock; the beacon blazes on the muster-place, and the clink of arms with

the fierce slogan rise among the lonely hills; tribe pours forth against tribe, with banners waving and pibroch yelling; the heather is in flames—the flocks are seized—the valley is strewn with dead—the cottage is sheeted with fire, and the green sod drenched with the blood of the inmates; for the world never saw quarrels more bitter than the hereditary feuds of our Scottish clans; and while the human heart and the human mind are constituted as they now are, there will be wars and crimes, the sack of cities, and the rush of armies; for men are but men, Ernestine, all the world over."

Three days we remained at Eckernfiörd, burying the dead, collecting provisions, curing the wounded, or embarking them for Zealand. Thanks to the skill of Dr. Pennicuik, and the sisterly attentions of Ernestine, I was able to attend parade on the evening of the fourth day; but I was so ghastly and pale, that one would have imagined all the experiments of the college of physicians had been tried upon me.

So M'Alpine told me, on seeing me almost staggering at the head of my company, and added, "On my honour, Rollo, I did not expect to see you again after hearing that you were wounded; for I thought our Danish doctors would soon do the rest."

"They are much obliged to you for your high opinion of their skill, Angus," said I; "but I have been under the hands, not of a Copenhagener, but a barber-chirurgeon, regularly graduated at King James' College, in the good town of Edinburgh—hence my rapid recovery, perhaps."

Ernestine had by this time informed me of the manner in which she believed Gabrielle had been betrayed into the hands of Merodé; and that she was only some ten or twelve miles distant from us, at Fredricksort on the gulf of Kiel. I would have given the world—had the world been mine—to have been permitted to march a wing of our stout Highland blades to overhaul Merodé in his quarters; but King Christian, who occupied the house of the Herredsfoged of Wohlder, had other objects in view; and the result of various councils of war, which he, Ian, Count Montgomerie, the Baron Karl, and others, held there, soon became developed.

I may mention that a party under Phadrig Mhor was despatched

to the cottage in the wood; but neither Bandolo nor dame Krümpel were found there. After burning it to the ground, they fished the tarn for the portmanteau, which I told them might be kept by the finders; and Gillian M'Bane, who when at home had been an expert pearl-fisher, after diving down once or twice, discovered its locality; the spoil was soon hooked out, and generously distributed by him fairly and equally among the privates of the regiment. It came to a handsome sum per man, and many of our musketeers wore silver buttons and silver-mounted sporrans to the end of their days.

Meanwhile the increasing preparations of the great Albrecht, Count of Wallenstein, who had been created Duke of Friedland, Sagan, Glogau, and Mechlenburg, General of the Baltic and Oceanic seas, compelled Christian IV. to exert himself without delay.

Entering fully into the ambitious views of his master, the Emperor, who, in making him Duke of Mechlenburg, had violated the laws and trampled upon the rights of the Germanic confederation, this great and warlike noble resolved to bend his whole energies to destroy the political independence of Germany, exterminate the heresy of Luther, and conquer Scandinavia. We heard that, for this gigantic project, he was rapidly building and equipping a flotilla of ships and gunboats at Rostock, Weimar, and other Hanse towns, which his Spanish fleet had seized.

Lavishing by thousands florins and ducats, the spoil of ravished kingdoms, on all sides among his reckless favourites and military followers, he led an army a hundred thousand strong across the Elbe, from whence it poured through Saxony and spread along the shores of the Baltic sea. Terror, extortion, outrage, and contribution, levied by beat of drum, at the sword's point, and the cannon's mouth, amassed to Wallenstein in seven years, the vast sum of *sixty thousand millions of dollars!*

Extolling his generosity, his soldiers adored him, while the ruined burghers and rified boors viewed him with horror and aversion. Thus, amid wealth and rapine, conquest and desolation, splendour, dissipation, and crime, the great army of the Empire flourished, and rolled like a cloud of flame over Germany; while provinces became deserts, and their people perished by famine, by disease, and by the sword.

CHAPTER XVI.

BOMBARDMENT OF KIEL.

ON being joined by a regiment of Dutch, under Colonel Dübbelstern, brother of the burgomaster of Glückstadt, the expedition resolved upon by the council of war was against Kiel, where Count Koenigheim, lately Tilly's aide-de-camp, commanded. Knowing well the reputed bravery of the count, and, moreover, that, notwithstanding his Germanised name, he was our own countryman, we expected to encounter unusual difficulties and dangers in the performance of our duty.

Spring had passed and summer come again ; the snows had melted ; the woods were putting forth their bright green leaves, and the migratory storks had returned, from the unknown regions of the south, to their former nests under the cottage eaves, or on the steep old burgh gables and the older village spires.

At daybreak on the morning of the first of May, the whole of the king's small force embarked on board his vessels ; the colonels of regiments, with their staffs and colours, were all on board the *Anna Catharina* ; with my company, I accompanied Ian Dhu. Though we were at sea, and ploughing the waves of the Baltic, as we ran round Danische-walde our men did not forget to welcome the rising sun on that auspicious morning, by baking their Beltane bannocks in the old Highland fashion, and breaking them crosswise, with as much ceremony as if they were at home in the land of hills and valleys.

The sorrow and alarm of Ernestine were increased by the greater distance which was now to be placed between her and her sister, whom, from various reports that reached us, she firmly believed to be, as Bandolo had said, in the power of Merodé at Fredricksort. The good King Christian, to whom Ernestine was presented by Ian, did all in his power to console her.

"Madame," said he, among many other remarks, "it is useless now to regret that you so unwisely permitted your sister and yourself to be wiled away from the castle of the queen, my mother, at Nyekiöbing, by the cunning tale of a rascal. It is enough that you were so—that much evil has come of it—evil that we must undo. Necessity has seldom pity for women's tears—and war, never! Yet, though my necessities are sore, and that, with scarcely three thousand men, I am wandering like a pirate among my own Danish isles, while Wallenstein and Tilly, with one hundred and thirty thousand men, have marched along the Elbe, and through all Juteland, even to the Skagen Cape, I will endeavour to free your sister from Fredricksort, though I may lose all in the attempt. Rest assured of that, lady. A week will not pass until I have done something in the matter. By force of arms perhaps I cannot reach her; but in my desperate fortune, though valour may fail, craft and guile may ultimately succeed."

"Within a week!" thought Ernestine, who could only weep and murmur her thanks; for in a week rescue might come too late, and under such terrible circumstances it seemed an age.

Considering the nature of the expedition we were bent on—the bombardment of a town—I was somewhat inclined to have left Ernestine behind us; but where could she have been left with safety to herself? Besides, as the honest and soldier-like king (who enjoyed as a capital joke the story of her throwing Bandolo's portmanteau into the duck-pond) said, this aggrieved personage was slippery and subtle as the great serpent, ferocious as a tiger, and now, being deprived of his gold, would place no bounds to his revenge; "consequently," said he, "the safest place for our pretty Imperialist is under the pennon of Sir Nickelas Valdemar, and the hatches of the *Anna Catharina*." The consciousness that Christian judged correctly, alarmed me so much that I could scarcely trust her out of my sight; but he gallantly relinquished to her use the great cabin, and dined among us in the gun-room, on cold salted beef and Dantzig beer; for this brave monarch loved better the jovial commeradrie of military society, than the hollow pomp that surrounded him as a king. As we rounded the point of the Danische-walde, and

the yards were braced up, to run us into the Kielerfiörd, the magazines were opened, the guns cast loose, and the signal to stand to arms and to quarters was given from the king's ship.

Ernestine was conveyed to a place of safety in the deep dark hold of the *Anna Catharina*, where a little berth had been hastily fitted up for her accommodation, and where she was attended by the wife of one of our musketeers, a red-cheeked Holsteiner. There the din of the approaching cannonade would be less heard, and there could be little danger of shot striking the hull so far beneath the water-line.

As the wind blew hard, and veered almost a-head, we carried Austrian colours to deceive the garrison while tacking frequently across that narrow fiörd; but the breeze changed twice, and, about sunset, we found ourselves abreast of the capital of Holstein, above the close steep roofs of which rose the square brick tower of its church, and the ramparts of that grim castle where the dukes of old resided, and on which, as well as on the university, we saw the white flag with the Imperial eagle unfurled; for, though our colours had misled Kœningheim, our manœuvres (after we came abreast of the town, and began to lie around it in the form of a half circle, as it occupies a peninsula) no longer deceived him as to our intentions.

The old town of Kiel, which covers what had anciently been an island, is yet completely separated from the land by the wet ditch of the castle, the base of which is in some places washed by the sea. A large suburb, called the New Town, interspersed by pleasant rows of trees, was then rising on the mainland, and was connected with the old by an ancient bridge, at the end of which was a drawbridge and gate, constantly guarded by a company of soldiers.

The walls of the strong and spacious castle became rapidly manned by musketeers in white buff-coats, and cannoniers in scarlet. Its eastern ramparts rose sheer from the salt water, along the margin of which, on the other side, lay the ducal garden, two hundred paces broad, and consisting of terraced walks rising above each other, beautifully arranged in the form of a labyrinth, and having in the centre a stone Triton, whose brass conch shot up a silver current of water high above the green

shrubbery; but now, among those fair parterres and terraced walks, the cannon baskets were placed at intervals, and between the deep fascines the grim culverins peered forth to sweep the harbour mouth.

The bells of the great church, of the university, and of the castle, were tolling an alarm as we approached, for each of these edifices was occupied by Austrian troops; and the seven ships of the king (we had three large and four small frigates) had now taken up their positions crescent-wise on three sides of the insulated city, hauled down their false colours, and run up the Royal standard of Denmark to the masthead. Then a simultaneous cannonade was opened upon us from the castle and its terraced gardens.

Being strong and active, our Highlanders were of great service in working the ship-artillery, by running back and urging forward the carriages; while the more skilful Danes pointed the cannon with great success, and thus the fascine batteries in the garden were soon ruined, the guns dismounted, and their men driven for shelter into the castle.

Sparing the tower of the church and the university, the three great ships maintained an unsparing and indiscriminate cannonade on the town; for though the capital of the duchy, the seat of its trade and government, and containing the hotels of its principal nobles, Christian IV. was resolved at all hazards to dislodge the enemy, and more than once sent a redhot thirty-two pound ball at the Count of Rantzau's mansion, which had a number of wooden galleries around it, hoping by these to set the whole place on fire—but without effect.

The whole fleet and town were soon enveloped in smoke, and we could only direct our fire by seeing the vane of the church and the towers of the castle shining in the last flush of the sunset above this murky cloud. A hundred pieces of cannon, ranging from carthouns (48-pounders) to demi-culverins (9-pounders), were discharged by the fleet upon the town, from whence the garrison, the strength of which was very great, maintained a desperate cannonade, pouring in reply a shower of balls and missiles of every sort and size, shot from bombards and carthouns, fieldpieces, and iron slings. Their mortars and bombards (100 lb pieces) were

loaded with stones, tiles, old jars, junks of iron and lead, nails and chains, which swept over our decks, and tore through the sails and rigging like a volley from a volcano. The whole conflict was maintained by great guns; hence the din was terrible. I believe there were not less than two hundred and forty pieces engaged on both sides. Strewed with killed and wounded men, some of whom were minus legs, arms, or heads, others cut in two, with their entrails shot away and twisted round the ragged and torn rigging, or wallowing in blood among the ruin of booms and boats, or splintered planks and shattered bulwarks, the main decks of the fleet presented the most frightful scene of carnage, smoke, and fire, united with the most infernal medley of appalling sounds—stern orders, bellowed in hoarse Danish through tin speaking-trumpets, shrieks, cries, and groans—the grating of the gun-carriages, the trampling of many feet, the crash of falling spars, the rattle of striking shot, and the hiss of those that swept over us into the water.

An immense number of our Highlanders were killed and wounded; of the foreigners I make no account. Torquil Gorm, our piper-major, who sat upon the capstan blowing *Brataich bhan clan Aoidh*, was knocked off his perch by a twelve-pound shot, and only escaped death by a miracle. Lieutenants Stuart and Lumsden (Invergellie) were severely wounded, and Kildon and Culcraigie had each a brother—who was sergeant of their pikes—killed beside them.

Finding that nothing was to be made of Kiel—that his ships were becoming mere slaughter-houses and wrecks, which bled at every port and pore—the king, as it was too dark to see flags, hoisted a lantern at his foremast-head as a sign to cease firing, and drop down the fiord before the wind. I cannot say that the order was obeyed with reluctance; and, favoured by a strong western breeze, the fleet rapidly bore away beyond reach of cannon shot, and lay to waiting for fresh orders.

Far out on the open fiord, with the stillness of the midnight ocean round us, and no sound to break it but the cries that came from the wounded and the dying, there seemed something dull, monotonous, and deathlike in our vessels now; they were but floating charnel-houses. Some of the smaller were under jury-

masts, and the sides of all were perforated by round shot-holes, like the top of a pepper-caster. In others, the torn sails were flapping against the splintered masts, and the rigging hung in disorder. It was a sad scene of desolation, agony, and death, which in twenty minutes had succeeded the fury of the bombardment. I hastened to Ernestine, whom I found in a little nook of the hold, in a stupor of astonishment and terror, and unable to weep. I had only time to assure her of my perfect safety, when I heard a drum beating on the main deck, and Phadrig Mhor shouted down the hatchway, that the king required the presence of all the officers in the great cabin.

There I hastened, and found him with the Count de Montgomery, the colonels of the Scots, Danes, and Dutch, Ian, the Baron Karl, and other officers, many of whom had their heads and arms bandaged. The cabin bore sufficient token of the number of heavy shot that had passed through it; the ports were yet open, and the dead bodies of several seamen were still lying by the larboard guns, just where they had fallen.

“Cavaliers and comrades,” said the king; “I wish to burn Kiel, that no shelter may remain there for the Austrians. One among you must undertake to do this for me, as I am less active than I was wont to be; but, as the duty is desperate, I will not select any of my allies. Let the Scots, French, Dutch, and Danish colonels cast lots for who shall have the honour of performing this arduous service, after which we shall all sail merrily, and land at Gottenburg.”

It was at once assented to; we crowded round the table; lots were cast in Karl’s helmet, and the duty fell to the Dutch, as the prize was drawn by old Dübelstiern, whom the king desired to select a party for the service, and accordingly he chose his entire battalion. This was considered absurd; but whether it was that Herr Dübelstiern was of opinion that he had seen quite enough of fighting for one night, or that it was the constitutional phlegm and slowness of the Dutch character which operated, I know not; but the impetuous king became enraged at their delay, and ordered lots to be cast again.

“Nay,” said Ian nobly; “may it please your majesty to excuse me from drawing lots again, for I cannot condescend to

do so twice. Give me but a hundred musketeers of my own regiment, and I will burn Kiel to your majesty's entire satisfaction."

"My company and I are at your service, Ian," said I, acting on the first impulse of the moment.

"It is gallantly offered," said the king; "a thousand thanks, my valiant Scots. Away then to your boats, for before the Dutch are under arms day will have broken."

In ten minutes my company were all in three large boats, sitting closely packed with their muskets between their knees; and with muffled oars we pulled softly towards the town. Our Highlanders roughly jeered the Dutch, desiring them to beat the *Scots March*, and keep up their courage thereby, as they were often glad to do in Flanders, when they wished to deceive and scare the enemy.*

* Here Munro corroborates our cavalier. "We that were officers met together in the Admirall Shipe, and agreed to command out the partie, and having cast lots it fell on the Dutch. They, suspecting the *danger*, delayed." Sergeant M'Leod of Captain Mackenzie's company "was killed," continues the colonel, "and twenty-two souldiers out of our regiment, that I commanded."—*Expedition with the worthy Scots Regiment.* Fol. 1637.

CHAPTER XVII.

A HORRIBLE ADVENTURE.

WE were provided with several fireballs and pots of wild-fire, a combustible composition so called from its ready ignition, for the amiable purpose of burning Kiel, and were guided by the purser of Sir Nickelas Valdemar, who, in more peaceful times, had been a distiller of corn brandy, and was wont to attend the great annual fair in that town—the *Kieler umschlag*. We pulled softly over the darkened water. Ian sat in the stern of the leading boat, and between me and the dull sky I saw the eagle's wing that surmounted the cone of his steel bonnet, as he sat erect and towering above all his soldiers. His drawn sword, with its long Gaëlic motto—that old hereditary heirloom of his race, which was never a moment from his side—was in his hand. I have heard Ian assert that this ancient blade possessed the property of inspiring courage, like the *Feadhan Dhu* of the Clanchattan. “The sword of a brave man always stirs the heart to gallant deeds,” he would say; “and this sword has been wielded by many generations of heroes.”

Behind him, the Lochaber axe of Phadrig Mhor was glinting in the starlight; for wherever Ian was, there Phadrig was sure to be.

Though weakened, and by my recent bruises somewhat nervous and excitable, I thought I was rather rash in venturing on this desperate service; and now, when in the open boat, came the reflection of what would be Ernestine's desolation and grief, if I was knocked on the head as the reward of my restless ambition.

As we pulled shoreward the night became intensely dark, so much so that we feared, unless lights were burned, we should never be able to regain our ships.

All seemed quiet as we approached the town, and, save an

occasional light glimmering in the vast masses of the old castle, there was no sign of life in the place; but we knew that Count Keeningheim had not less than 2000 men in garrison, and of their determination we had recently received the most ample proof.

Ian had observed that on the right flank of the town, along the gulf or haven, there lay a beautiful walk, bordered by several rows of lofty trees, which were now in full foliage, and would conceal our approach.

Where the boats grounded the beach was silent and still. The whole place seemed deserted. Not a leaf was stirring now, for even the western wind had died away, and we heard only the waves of the Kielerfiörd chafing on the bulwarks of the path, as we landed. Ian Dhu was the first who sprang ashore, and, with their muskets loaded, our men formed in file, and marched towards the town, the walls of which were about two hundred yards distant. Our service was a strange and desperate one; for the enemy had cavalry, whose patrols might have cut us off, and, if an alarm had been given, our boats must have run the gauntlet along the lower gun batteries before we could regain the fleet.

“However,” said Ian, to whom I mentioned these probabilities; “our firepots will find them work enough, and enable us to get clear off.”

Marching in silence, and halting once or twice to listen while shrouded by the bordering trees, we found ourselves near the strong postern gate, over which grinned a couple of forty-eight pounders; but our guide, the purser, who had been in the habit of conveying his barrels to the fair without the ceremony of showing them to the keepers or leviers of duty at the barriers, led us towards a small house that he knew of. This place proved to be deserted. He raised the flooring, and revealed to us a secret passage which led under the walls, and directly into the town.

I shall never forget the exciting emotions we experienced, when, after crawling through a hole, dark and dusty like an ancient drain, we issued from a small shed, under which it opened, into a gloomy and deserted street, where, with Phadrig Mhor, his chief, and six chosen Highlanders, I found myself

within the walls and gates, the guards and cannon, of Kiel: The rest of our men, to the number of ninety-four, occupied the cottage without, ready to succour us or secure our retreat.

The storks uttered unearthly sounds, and flapped their wings over our heads. They appeared to be the only inhabitants in that part of the town; and from the postern already mentioned, a street opened westward in one unbroken line straight to the market place.

“What large building is that, Herr?” asked Ian, pointing with his sword to an edifice near us; “is it a church?”

“No,” replied the purser, “it is the hall where the high Court of Appeal for the duchy sits; the enemy have turned it into a magazine for powder.”

“Powder! then the high Court of Appeal shall sit there no more, Mein Herr; for we will blow it up.”

“It is guarded—see, yonder is the sentinel, walking to and fro before the building,” said the purser; but the soldier indicated could not discern us, as our men stood with their backs close to the houses, and under their shadow. “But as to blowing it up, Herr Schottlander, I beseech of you not to think of that,” continued the purser, “for it will create an alarm, and totally prevent our escape. Let us content ourselves by placing these firepots with lighted matches in some of the empty houses, and then retiring the way we came.”

“Dioul! but I think you are right, master purser,” said Ian; “besides, Herr, when the town is on fire the magazine must blow up as a matter of course. Softly, then, comrades—this way,” he added, to the six Highlanders, who had slung their muskets to enable them the better to bear the combustibles with which they were loaded.

At that moment we heard the Imperialist who guarded the front door of the Court of Appeal, challenge some one who approached his post.

A voice replied, and an officer muffled in a long mantle, wearing a broad hat and slouching feather, followed by three pike-men, passed down the centre of the street, to visit the guard at that postern gate which the purser’s friendly cottage, with its smuggling trapdoor, had enabled us to avoid.

They passed us within half a pistol-shot, and then we could hear the rattle of arms as the sentinel at the gate turned out the guard, and the officer with his escort departed to visit some other post.

"Now, there is not a moment to be lost," said Ian; "let us fire these houses next the magazine, and then escape by yonder fox-hole."

It was done in less than five minutes.

We entered the empty houses, either by forcing the doors or removing the windows, but as softly as possible. Ian selected one, Phadrig a second, and I a third. We placed the firepots and wild-fire in the centre of the floors; heaped them over with straw and oiled chips of wood brought from the fleet; then we ignited the matches, and hurried back to the street.

The matches were supposed to burn gradually for five minutes, by which time we expected to be clear of Kiel, and on the high-road to our boats. Accompanied by Gillian M'Bane and Donald M'Vurich, I had just completed my preparations for giving at least one house a comfortable heating, and, firing the match, hastened out to the street, when we were met, face to face, by—whom? The Imperial officer and his three pikemen, returning leisurely from their rounds, and singing a carol to the tramp of their own feet.

Having accomplished our work sooner than Ian or his henchman, we were unfortunately the first in the street, and the Imperialists were confounded to find themselves confronted by three armed men in the Scottish garb. Our swords were ready, my two musketeers blew their matches, and the Austrian pike-men levelled their weapons to the charge.

"Fire and fagot! how came you here?" asked the officer, whose voice made me start; "yield, sirs, for I would not have you killed if I can save you."

"Count Koenigheim!" said I, recognising him; "back—back—give way; for we will die weapon in hand, but never yield. For the sake of Ernestine," I added, in a loud and earnest whisper, "let this be a drawn conflict—for if I am slain she will be without a protector."

"Villain!" he exclaimed, with fierce joy, "art thou the Captain Rollo?"

“The same, at your service, count,” said I, as our blades were pressed hard against each other; “but why so bitter an epithet to a brother Scot, for such I should be, though under a different banner?”

“You have stolen the daughter of my friend from the court of the Danish queen, and for these many weeks past have conveyed her from ship to ship, and isle to isle—all to the severe prejudice of her honour.”

“It is a villain’s thought and a falsehood, which none but a villain could conceive,” said I, furiously; “but she is your affianced wife, and—”

The count uttered a bitter laugh, then, trembling with passion, he rushed upon me like a cannon-ball, and gave me a succession of fierce thrusts, all of which I succeeded in parrying.

My affianced wife—my affianced wife, indeed!” he continued, giving me another and another. “Oh, fool of fools! do you not know that, with all her beauty, I would not wed her if she had the Bohemian crown upon her brow, and the wealth of India at her feet?”

While this was passing, the purser had dived into his secret hole, and vanished like a ghost at cock-crow. Ian, the sergeant, and our other four soldiers, came to the appointed place, and found me fencing away like a sword-player with Koenigheim, whom they only knew to be an Imperialist. The three pikemen fled, believing the town to be in possession of the enemy; and Ian, who, like a true Highlander, would not permit the single combat to be interrupted, stood between us and the six musketeers (who continued ominously to blow their matches), and, leaning on his long sword, watched with a fierce but anxious eye every turn of the desperate game.

The red sparks flew in showers from the steel blades; we were both so expert, that not a scar was given or received on either side; but I was still so weak, that step by step I was driven back towards the Hall of Appeals. I called repeatedly to Ian, to Phadrig, and the soldiers, to regain the boats and leave me to my fate; but they still remained, although the blaze of the burning houses began to flash across the thoroughfare, and we heard the drums beating in every quarter, as the various guards

at different points of the city rushed to their colours, and the whole garrison became alarmed.

It was a time of desperation!

Ian by one thrust of his long sword, Phadrig by one blow of his tremendous axe, or our musketeers by a single shot, could have ended the conflict and the life of Kœnigheim together; but this the chivalry of Highland warfare would by no means permit. Thus the duel continued, the conflagration increased, and the long angry roll of the drums rang the call *to arms* in castle and cantonments, at the gates and all along the harbour. Every moment I felt assured that Kœnigheim was becoming stronger than me. My sight became dim, and I was beaten backward until I found myself driven against a door at the corner of a lane. I staggered—it yielded; and then I fell headlong—not into a passage—but down into a deep, dark hole—a cellar or some such place.

The street, the wavering light that filled it, vanished from me in an instant, as I descended into total darkness.

At that moment I heard a confused discharge of muskets, and an awful explosion, with a roar and the sensation of every thing being convulsed below and around me, as if the earth were splitting into halves, and I knew that it was the stately Hall of Appeals which had been blown up like a house of cards.

I cannot describe the crash—the mighty torrent of united sounds—the rending asunder of massive walls—the bursting of arches, knitted together centuries ago—the cracking of oaken beams, amid a whirlwind of bricks and mortar, slates and rubbish, as the house under which I had fallen crumbled into ruin in a moment; and though I did not feel any thing crushing me down, I had the horrible conviction of being entombed beneath a mass of fallen masonry and timber.

My claymore was still in my hand; the earth was damp, and I lay upon it breathless, gasping, and almost stunned for a time. Then a drowsy sensation came over me, and for half an hour or so I seemed to be in a kind of waking dream.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SUFFOCATION—THE DARK PIT.

“ WHERE the deuce am I ? ” was my first thought and exclamation on rallying my scattered energies.

I was painfully certain of entombment under a mountain of fallen masonry, which, for aught that I could foresee, might not in these times of trouble be removed for years. The air soon became close and oppressive. I began an examination of the trap into which I had fallen, by feeling all round me with outspread hands; for the darkness was as dense as if I had been shut up in a block of marble.

The ceiling—if it could be called so—was composed of beams of hard wood planked over; being evidently the floor of an apartment above; and by the dull, dead sound those planks returned, when striking on them with the hilt of my sword, I became convinced that the whole debris of a fallen house was heaped above me! Of this I was the more certain on discovering that the trapdoor, through which I had passed, was choked up by fragments of torn partitions, beams and stones, which I could grasp with my hands when standing upon a barrel over which I had stumbled in the dark. Around me were four stone walls, forming an area of about twenty feet by fifteen, and below me was the damp earth. I was undoubtedly buried alive in a cellar, from which escape seemed hopeless.

As this terrible conviction came home to my mind, the perspiration oozed from every pore, and a pang of agony entered my heart like a sharp poniard. My emotions cannot be described, and thoughts that were bitter and heart-rending came crowding upon me like a torrent.

Ernestine, whom I would never see more—whose voice I would never hear again—and whose dark eye would never turn

to mine with its mild inquiring glance, or its glad and roguish smile, was left among rough soldiers and rougher sailors on board of Christian's wandering fleet, exposed to danger and perhaps to insult; for when I was dead to whom could she turn with confidence for protection? And Gabrielle, too! Gabrielle, whom I had hoped to free and restore to her, would now be left hopelessly the prisoner of Merodé, exposed to greater perils, and such as it was impossible to consider with calmness or contemplate with patience.

Doubtless brave Ian Dhu might protect Ernestine and free Gabrielle, even as I would have done; but, remembering the dangers that surrounded him only an hour ago, and the musket shots I had heard, it was more than probable that he and all who were with him had fallen in combat, and were now lying in the ruined street—perhaps not twenty yards from me. Whether he and Koenigheim too had escaped, or perished by the explosion, was all a mystery to me; but the former seemed next to an impossibility; and I pictured the anguish of Ernestine when morning stole into the dull and comfortless cabin of the *Anna Catharina*—when the bright sun came to gladden the grey waters—when the waves rolled in light, and Denmark's flat but wooded shores were sparkling in the sunny haze—when hour after hour would steal away, and when I did not come! What would be her emotions when the terrible truth was told her by some survivor of our Raid to Kiel?

The atmosphere of the place gradually became closer and more difficult to inhale; at times I thought this was fancy—at others, reality; but perhaps my nervous and excited state exaggerated the truth. I thought with horror of the pangs of hunger and thirst to be endured before I should die; my fate, ignominious and unhonoured; my unshared, solitary, and unimagined agonies—even my grave might never be known. My death might be mourned for while I was yet alive; for I calculated on living for many days yet to come.

Again and again all these thoughts, and others of home and my dear native country, recurred to me; again and again they returned, each time with renewed poignancy and bitterness, and the anticipation of dying there unknown, was as bad for a time

as those of hunger and thirst. The vulgar fear of being devoured by rats was not the least of my torments; for of these vermin, I had born in me a powerful and unconquerable aversion.

The air seemed to grow stifling. I shouted with that loud hallo which, many a time and oft, I had sent far through the Highland deer forests; but my own voice sounded dull and faint, as it was returned upon my ear.

Overburdened by thought and anxiety, my heart became sick and weary; my head ached as the oppression of the atmosphere became greater; and I have no doubt that the effect of my recent wound—the contusion received at Eckernfiörd—greatly contributed to exaggerate all that the darkness, mystery, loneliness, and the anticipation of a most horrible death, could produce on an active imagination.

The Imperialists would think no more of me than of the last year's leaves; and the idea of their digging for me, even if Koenigheim escaped, seemed simply absurd.

I endeavoured to picture the slow agonies of a death by hunger and thirst, but shrank from the task, and remembered to have heard my mother tell me, that when David Duke of Rothesay was found dead in the vault of Falkland-tower, in his hunger and madness he had gnawed and torn with his teeth the flesh from his left arm. Could I ever be reduced to such a state?

My bones might lie for ten, twenty, or even a hundred years, before discovery; and I thought grimly of the speculation they might excite, when some grave pathologist delivered his opinion, and when men spoke of the wars of other times—those wars of which their sires had spoken, and in which their grandsires fought; and I remembered the various instances of bones being brought to light under similar circumstances, and under my own observation, the vague mystery and fear with which these poor reliques of humanity were regarded by those who endeavoured in vain to conjecture the story that belonged to them; the crime perpetrated, or the wrong endured—the story that none could tell, and which would never be known until the last trumpet rent the earth to its centre.

I began to feel weak, helpless, and confused, and listened with agonised intensity to catch any sound, however distant;

and then, as before, it seemed as if many a voice with which I was familiar came to me. My mind wandered, I imagined myself again on board the king's ship, and amid the smoke, carnage, and boom of the cannonade. Then came other ideas of strife—an imaginary conflict; Ian with his eagle's plume, red-bearded Angus M'Alpine, Kildon with his M'Kenzies, M'Coll of that Ilk, and all the gallant hearts of our regiment were by my side. I heard the yell of Torquil's pipe; I saw the tartans waving, the red musketry flashing as its echoes rolled over hill and valley; I saw the gleam of steel, and felt the glow of the bright warm sun of a summer noon, as it shone on the broad arena of a bloody battle. I brandished my sword—I shouted. Kœningheim was again before me; his steel rang on mine, and I was conscious that Bandolo, poniard in hand, was gliding near me like a serpent.

All this wild vision and its excitement evaporated, and I believe that I must have slept; for long after, on awakening once again to the horrors of that dark and living tomb, and worse than all to my own tormenting thoughts, I found myself lying on the damp ground.

Was it night or was it day on the upper earth? In that palpable darkness, no one could tell.

I listened, and heard my heart beating. At times I thought there came other sounds to me, in my loneliness. Once a horse's hoofs rang on the pavement; a dragoon had perhaps passed through an adjacent street. At another time I heard the faint note of a trumpet; and these sounds served but to increase my fretful eagerness to be free.

I do not think that I prayed aloud to Heaven to help me; but many a deep, pious, and fervent thought swelled my heart; and after a time I took courage, and searched my whole prison minutely again for some crack, joint, or cranny, by which a passage might be forced.

Around me the walls were as solid as stone could make them; above me were the oaken beams and jointed planks, rendered quite as solid and immovable by the superincumbent load of a fallen house.

I sat down again in despair. My head was still aching, and

my breast was oppressed by the difficulty experienced in respiration; my weakness and helplessness increased; sensations of suffocation were coming on, and at length I lay on the earth in the belief that I was dying. My soul trembled at the terrible conviction that I was on the verge of eternity, and I endeavoured to pray, but my thoughts and words were all too incoherent for utterance.

Wild visions floated before me, with long blanks and pauses between; and during these blanks I now believe that I must have been insensible.

My tongue was parched and burning; then imaginary fountains of pure water gushed and sparkled in the sunshine, as they poured over cool and mossy rocks into deep and shady dells; in some instances, when I approached them, the water seemed to vanish, and the bare and arid rock alone remained; in others, I was bound and fettered hand and foot, unable to move, and saw the gurgling water winding between flowery borders into the shady recesses of a wooded dell. I stretched my hands towards it; but a mighty incubus weighed down my limbs, then the vision passed away, and I lay prostrate and gasping amid a dark, a moist, and noxious atmosphere.

Many hours must thus have passed away—not less, perhaps, than six-and-thirty. I imagined that Ernestine spoke to me from time to time, and I heard her voice coming as from a vast distance. She was laughing, and we were among summer fields where the yellow corn was waving; where the green trees rustled their heavy foliage in the warm breeze, and the glossy ravens were wheeling aloft into a blue and sunny sky.

Then I heard the sound of other voices, the clink of axes and grating of shovels; I thought that the hour of deliverance was at hand; that I was about to be dug out, and restored to the upper world, and I laughed with joy. The German soldiers were jesting and singing at their work, as they seemed to draw nearer and nearer to me.

Then I heard Koenigheim say that their labour was in vain, and might be relinquished, for by this time I must assuredly be dead—and I heard them retire! Methought I strove to shout, to let them hear that I still lived, but my tongue clove to the

roof of my parched throat—my hard and baked lips refused their office, and the horror of the dream awoke me for an instant to the life I had been assured was gradually passing away from me.

Still the same darkness, the same solemn stillness, the same mysterious and horrible abandonment. I sank again; but the old vision returned with the clank of shovels and axes, the rattle of stones and crow-bars, with a laugh or an oath, as the German pioneers cleared away the rubbish, till their feet and implements sounded distinctly on the planks of oak. Oh! it was a delicious and a joyous dream!

Then all at once there burst upon my half-blinded eyes a stream of glorious sunlight, with the pure and refreshing air, as one pickaxe was inserted, and a plank torn up; then, but not till then, did I learn that it was no dream, but a dear reality, and that I was saved! I heard three or four soldiers drop after each other into the pit; strong hands were laid upon me, and I was lifted up from among the ruins; then a horn of Neckar wine was given me, for I was faint and trembling. I soon revived, but with the utmost difficulty retained my eyes open, after such a long immersion in Cimmerian gloom; and I was so feeble, that Koenigheim and one of his officers had to support me between them, as they conveyed me through the ruined street towards the castle of Kiel.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CASTLE OF KIEL.

FRESH air and light, a little food and wine, with one night's sound sleep, completely restored me.

Partially undressed, and with a rich velvet mantle thrown over me, I was lying upon a beautiful bed, which, as I afterwards learned, was the couch of that valiant Duke of Holstein, Adolph, archbishop of Bremen, who overran the Ditmarsch, and compelled the proud Hamburgers do him homage. The four columns sustaining the canopy were of exquisitely carved oak; the canopy itself, and the coverlet, were of blue silk, brocaded with gold flowers; the former was surmounted by plumes of feathers, and was lined with white silk, fringed with silver within and gold without. It was too luxurious, and seemed like a beautiful toy, made only to be admired, or for a fairy to sleep in. The apartment was neither wainscoted nor tapestried, but was hung with matting of shining straw; the ceiling was composed of oak, the beams of which intersected each other, forming panels wherein had been recently emblazoned all the armorial bearings of Christian IV.; the variously coloured lions of Denmark, Sleswig, Norway, and Gothland; the golden dragon of Schonen; the paschal lamb of Juteland; the blue cavalier of Ditmarsch; the nettle leaves of Holstein; the cygnet of Stormalm; the cross of Oldenburg, &c. &c.; the leopard, the crossed spears, and the crowned savages, wreathed and armed with clubs. Three windows of stained glass faced the gulf of Kiel; one of these had been broken by the passage of a cannon-shot, and fragments of the iron bars and brass wire which formed the latticed grating were visible beyond.

The whole furniture was in confusion; in some places mirrors were broken; in others, were pictures that bore strong traces of having received a passing slash from a sword.

I had just made a survey of all this by one glance, and throwing aside the mantle was about to rise, when Count Kœningheim, who had been writing in a recess of one of the windows—for the castle walls were of enormous thickness—approached, and bade me good-morning.

I gave my hand to this soldier of fortune, who, only a night or two ago, had expressed his rage at me for loving a woman whom he vowed not to marry even if she was a queen, with the wealth of India for her dowery.

“Well, my comrade,” said he, after a few words of compliment and inquiry had passed; “Zounds! was not yonder blow-up a rough interruption of our tilting-match?”

“Your magazine of powder, was it not?”

“Twenty tons were stored up in the Hall of Appeal. On the night of the bombardment I had a saucisson laid, and the hall undermined, to blow up the whole in case of being obliged to abandon Kiel. Your partial conflagration fired the saucisson, and has cost the emperor more powder than he will probably commit to my care again—for some time at least.”

“And my comrades—did they all escape?”

“All, save one. Favoured by the confusion, they vanished from the streets, and, regaining their boats, got clear off; but that secret entrance will not serve their purpose a second time.”

“And he who did not escape?” said I.

“Is now hanging from yonder tower,” said the count, opening one of the pointed windows, and showing me a prospect of the town, the chief feature of which was the great square tower of the church, with its lofty and tapering hexagonal spire, from the summit of which there dangled something like a crow. I could perceive it to be a human figure, but diminished by distance, and wavering in the sea breeze; it swung to and fro, now against the spire, and now a few feet from it in the air.

“Count Kœningheim,” said I, turning with anxiety and indignation from this startling spectacle, “and have you—who, like myself, am a Scottish soldier of fortune—dared to hang one of my comrades?”

“If yonder Danish purser, whilome a distiller and smuggler, was one of your comrades, then I have indeed dared to do so.”

"The poor man was only serving his king and his country."

"He has cost the Emperor twenty tons of good gunpowder—an unanswerable argument," replied the count, as he folded up his despatch and endorsed it to Tilly, whose troops were down somewhere about the mouth of the Elbe. "And did you really imagine, Captain Rollo, that I would have hanged one of our kindly Scots, as I hung yonder purser? *Hawks dinna pyke oot hawks' een*; and I assure you, that although we fight under different banners, I love the blue bonnet far too well to hang its wearer as a Danish scarecrow. In the devilish mood I was in on the night of the bombardment, I would have thought no more of slaying you—if able—than of taking this glass of wine; but after the affair was over—after I thought you fairly crushed to death—and a day or two had elapsed, it seemed a shame and a scandal to me that a brave Scot, with the tartan on his breast and the kilt above his knee, should lie uncoffined like a dog under a fallen house. I set the pioneers of Camargo to dig out your remains, and had fully resolved to inter them with all the honours of war in the great church of the good city of Kiel. We had not the most remote hope of finding you alive in the vault, like Holger Danske in that dungeon under Cronborg castle, where, as the legend says, he has sat for a thousand years with his armed knights around him."

"And where is the Danish fleet?"

"At the mouth of the gulf, where Christian has landed, and ordered your regiment of Highlanders to erect a strong sconce on the shore. But enough of these things at present. You will breakfast with me, and then we will talk of military business afterwards."

"Business," thought I; "that must mean my transmission as a prisoner of war into Central Germany!" He led me through various apartments to one, the princely magnificence of which excited my admiration. Kœningheim laughed at me, saying—

"Ere long, there may be no other hangings on these walls than such as the spider spins."

During breakfast he asked me many questions concerning Ernestine—casually, concerning her health and amusements, but all with kindness, and without the slightest tinge of jealousy.

Though his friendship was sincere, it was evident that he did not love her. There was a riddle in this! The count, her father—old Rupert-with-the-Red-plume—was at Vienna, and was soon expected by the army to resume the command of his division. The poor man consequently still believed that his daughters were in perfect safety with the old Queen of Denmark.

“Then,” said I, “neither you nor he are aware that Gabrielle has been abducted by Merodé?”

“Merodé—abducted!” stammered Kœningheim, as his sun-burnt cheek grew pale, and then flushed with anger; “do you tell me that Merodé has dared——”

As briefly as possible I related the dangers into which the sisters had fallen; the affair of Bandolo, and the retention of Gabrielle at Fredricksort.”

The count thrust his breakfast from him.

“Fire and sword!” he exclaimed; “to know now that they have been in the Wohlder, within a few toises of my outposts, and I knew not of it! Oh! Captain Rollo, I love those girls as if they were my own sisters—for they are good, amiable, winning, and indeed most loveable; yet withal, and notwithstanding Carlstein’s kind intentions, believe me I have no more idea of marriage than of flying in the air. Oh no! I shall never marry! I do not think that the world possesses a daughter of Eve who could tempt me to forsake the camp for her bower, or the head of my regiment for the poor pastime of dangling at her skirt. Fortunately, it is not far from this to Fredricksort, and Gabrielle shall be freed even if we must take the place by storm. Ten devils! to think she has been so long with such a man as Merodé!”

“Perhaps he is not so bad as rumour makes him. He may respect the high rank and perfect purity of Gabrielle.”

“Respect—he, Merodé!” reiterated Kœningheim, with an angry laugh; “we might as well expect heaven and hell to change places, as to find one virtuous emotion in the heart of that ignoble soldier. The fool! he thinks that poor Carlstein is in hopeless disgrace, when at this very hour he may be travelling from Vienna with greater honours than any of us, save Wallenstein, have yet attained. Rest assured that I will free

Gabrielle, and protect her until she is restored to her father or her sister. If Merodé will not yield her," continued Kœnighem, beginning to buckle on his cuirass and sword; "by Heaven! I will pistol him at the head of his regiment. I am not a man who stands on trifles, neither is Carlstein—old Rupert with-the-Red-plume—as we Imperialists call him."

"You lads of the black eagle make small account of human life; and value blood no more than water."

"Blood!" he muttered, while continuing to arm himself; "the shedding of it under harness is but a matter of necessity. Yet, alas! Captain Rollo, by a fatal mischance, and in a moment of ungoverned passion, my disastrous hand has shed the blood of *one* whose fate hath cast a horror over my path in life. Wherever I have gone—in the camp and in the city, in the field and on the ocean, on the Scottish hills and on the German plains—that cloud has overhung me! With my own existence only, the cloud and the horror will pass away; but the memory of the deed I have done will never die in the peaceful spot which was blighted and cursed by its committal. I destroyed a life, to preserve and to defend which, I would have given my own a thousand times over, could such have been; but let me not recur to these old memories, for they madden and unman me!"

A dark shade had overspread the handsome face of Kœnighem—his eyes were saddened, and a spasm contracted his features; but, without remarking the bitterness of his emotion, I continued to assist him in accoutring, and also armed myself; for I had begun to entertain faint hopes of not being kept as a prisoner after all.

"Come, come Kœnighem," said I; "you are not the only man who has slain a dear friend in a sudden quarrel."

"*Friend!*" he repeated, in a voice that made me start.

"No; when wine is in the head, and when the sword is in the hand, such things will happen," I continued, supposing that he referred to an unfortunate duel.

"Oh no!" said he mournfully; "such deeds as mine are done but seldom—yet, let me not think of it! Peace—solitude—at such times madden me. Action! action! that is the only relief.

Come with me, then; let us ride for Fredricksort, and save Gabrielle from Merodé—the lamb from the wolf—the dove from the vulture."

We descended to the gate of Kiel, for the hope of liberty and of freeing Gabrielle restored me to fresh energy; and though Kœningheim expressed his doubts of my ability for exertion, I waived every objection, and, accompanied by four dragoons of the regiment de Wingarti, who wore black iron helmets and corslets, white buff coats with wide skirts edged by red cloth, jackboots, swords, musketoons and pistols, we set forth; and though scarcely able to keep on my saddle, by weakness resulting from recent mishaps at Eckernförd and Kiel, I was never behind Kœningheim by the length of my horse's head.

To be brief, after a hard ride round the shore of the gulf, and seeing every where the poor peasantry flying at our approach to moor, morass, and woodland, we reached the great fortress of Fredricksort, only to find it a pile of dismantled and blackened ruins; for in some of their wild excesses, Merodé's officers (on the very night we were bombarding Kiel) had set their quarters on fire. They were thus compelled to remove to a neighbouring village, from whence—by orders received direct from Wallenstein—they had marched no one knew whither; but by certain smoky indications at the horizon, we supposed their route lay towards Flensburg. Merodé had several ladies with him in caleches, and a number of other women, and a vast quantity of plunder, in waggons and on horses; thus his regiment marched off like a triumphal procession, singing in chorus, with all their drums beating and colours flying, and with crowds of camp followers mingling and shouting among their riotous and disorderly ranks.

Such was the account we received from the tall Jesuit, Father Ignatius, who had visited Fredricksort on the same good errand that had brought us from Kiel, and whom we met fortunately, in a narrow green lane (near the ruined castle), where the good man had dismounted from his mule, and taken off its bridle, that the animal might crop the herbage that grew by the wayside.

Accompanied by the Jesuit, we returned towards Kiel with

the unpleasant conviction that our journey had been perfectly futile; and having a fresh source of anxiety in the doubt, whether Merodé had taken Gabrielle away with his *ladies* who occupied the carriages, or whether the poor girl had perished among the flames of the burning fortress.

"There were no less than six waggons crowded by soldiers' wives, all as drunk as liquor could make them," said Father Ignatius.

"'Tis fortunate for those ladies that the old Roman law, by which a husband could slay his wife if her breath indicated wine, no longer exists," said I.

"But those ammunition wives smelt only of schnaps and brandy," said the priest, turning up his eyes.

Busk the Centh.

CHAPTER XX.

THE HIGHLAND OUTPOST.

THROUGH tracts of level land, as yet unscathed by war; along bridle-roads, bordered by rich meadows and comfortable farm-houses; and through little towns, that were as picturesque and as pretty as bright red bricks, spotless plaster, and paint could make them, we rode back by the way we had come. On one side lay the gulf; on the other, occasional tarns and groves of wood, covering the gentle slopes that rose almost imperceptibly from the margin of the dark blue sea. Yet the denizens of those pleasant places were all bondsmen; and, without consent of the lord from whom they held their *huso* by tenure, could neither marry nor give in marriage, become craftsmen, or engage in service elsewhere than in the land on which they were born.

All those places, too, swarmed with supernatural inhabitants, who were a source of terror to the poor peasantry. The little hillocks were inhabited by wicked and avaricious but industrious Trolds; the moors, by tall, pale, and beautiful Elle women, who attracted young men by their winning gestures, and then breathed on their faces to make them sicken and die. All the wells and lakes were enchanted—here a fiery dragon watched the ransom of a king; there the wild huntsman kennelled his black hounds;—here dwelt a witch who sold fair winds; there a devil who wrought all manner of mischief. But at that time our minds were full of other things; and we rode round the margin of the Kielerfiörd, accompanied by the tall priest, whose long legs, as he bestrode his mule, almost reached to the ground on each side.

"I have heard that Carlstein freed you without ransom, after being taken prisoner in Luneburg," said Koenigheim.

"Without ransom!—I need scarcely thank him for that, being so poor that I might have remained captive until the day of doom. I could only give the good count my thanks, and leave him my best wishes."

"And your heart, too—is it not so? Well, I must not be less generous; besides, the Emperor has more prisoners at Vienna than he knows what to do with. Your comrades have landed, as I mentioned, some twenty miles down the gulf, and are there forming a sconce, with what object, and for what service, the brave King Christian only knows; but, before returning to Kiel, I shall see you safe within pistol-shot of his outposts."

"Count," said I, "you shall ever be remembered among my dearest friends."

"Among soldiers friendship soon ripens, and a short acquaintance goes a long way. Is it not so, Father Ignatius?"

The Jesuit was too much occupied by his own thoughts to make any reply.

"Do not omit to impress upon poor Ernestine, that before another week is past, if her sister is between the Elbe and the Liimfiord, she shall be free, and the insults she has suffered will be dearly avenged; for the old count is coming, and Merodé cannot escape us both."

"Have you no kinder message than this?"

"I know of none that would be more welcome—from me, at least. Besides," said he, turning with a bitter curl on his fine lip; "what other message would you have me send by *you* to the woman you love? There is somewhat of a sneer in the question, Captain Rollo, and you might have spared me that. Suppose, now, that I had committed to your charge the most warm and ardent messages of love, fidelity, and so forth; would they have been welcome to your ears? would they have been pleasant to your memory? would they have been faithfully, and without diminution, conveyed to Ernestine?"

"They would have been pleasant neither to my ear nor to my memory," I replied; "yet, on my honour, I would have conveyed them faithfully to her."

“Acknowledge, however, that you asked for what you had no wish to hear.”

“I confess that I did.”

“Then, be assured, I have no such messages to send to Ernestine. For her I have indeed a true and tender love; but only such as I have for her sister — or as a father or brother might have for them both. Count Rupert is one of my oldest and earliest friends. He was my tutor and patron under Mansfeldt and Sir John Hepburn in the Flemish war. He would gladly see us more nearly and dearly connected than by the mere ties of comraderie, but that can never be; and Ernestine, with whom rumour has so often done me the honour to link my name, knows that well — though she knows not the reason why.”

These words filled me with joy; for Koenigheim had so much that was brilliant and fascinating about him, that, had we both assailed the heart of Ernestine at the same time, I fear me much that the poor captain of Scottish musketeers, might have had but a poor chance of success when competing with the accomplished noble of the German empire.

“The reason — the reason,” he continued, muttering under his thick mustaches: “Ah — Christi Creutz be about me! — if she, or thou, or he knew it, how you would all shrink from me!”

This was scarcely spoken — yet we heard it; and the priest bent his keen grey eyes on the count, whose gaze was lowered on the mane of his horse; for the memory of years long past was rising before him, and his thoughts were turned inward.

“Let us change the subject,” said the Jesuit, bending over his mule towards me; “the gloomy fiend is uppermost, and his dark thoughts are upon him.”

Amid Koenigheim’s forced gaiety, I had frequently perceived a melancholy enthusiasm; at times, his laugh would cease abruptly, and his brow would knit; then his eye became clouded, and his voice sad. What secret thought was this that preyed upon the soul of the naturally gay and gallant soldier, souring his manner, and prematurely silvering his dark and curly hair? I was perplexed and interested; but courtesy compelled me to conceal what I observed. Animated by the same feeling, and to change the conversation, the Jesuit told us a legend concerning

St. Knud, which he had lately learned from the MSS. of an old brother of his order. It related to the adventures of his saint, when first he came thither to preach among the Sclavi, who of old inhabited all Holstein, which derives its name from *holt*, an ancient word for a forest, the whole promontory of Chersonesus Cimbrica being then covered by dense woods of pine and beech, extending from the Baltic to the Western Sea.

Marvelling sorely at the wildness of the country and its inhabitants, St. Knud came to a place where there was a little green valley between two hills, which were covered to their summits by foliage, and there a little figure suddenly approached him.

Unlike the painted Sclavi, who were naked, or clad only in the skins of bears, and armed with bows and spears of flint, the mannikin wore a grey doublet with large horn buttons, and an enormous red cap, which was nearly three feet in diameter, though he was barely two feet in height. He had a large and solemn visage, a long hooked nose, a back with a prodigious hump, and a heavy paunch; he carried a flute about twice the length of himself, whereon he began to play melodiously at the approach of the saint, who, on hearing the music, felt his feet beginning to trip; and had he not signed the cross in time, nathless his sacred character, his palmer's gown, which had lain for a time in the holy sepulchre, his staff, which had been cut on Mount Calvary, and his scallop from the shores of Galilee (for St. Knud had just returned from Jerusalem), he would have been compelled to dance like all who heard the fairy music of this grotesque little gnome, who was king and liege lord of all the Trolds in Denmark.

On beholding the sign of the cross, the Trold stamped his little foot with rage, and broke his immense flute into a hundred pieces, all of which vanished with a shrill sound.

“By that sign, I know thou shalt conquer!” said the imp, passionately.

“Who art thou that knowest this?” asked St. Knud.

“I am called Skynde, king of the Trolds,” said the mannikin, under his enormous mustaches, which, with his beard, resembled a frozen waterfall, “and I am come to meet thee in the name,

of all the underground people, whom thy coming hath alarmed ; and we hope to sign a peace or truce with thee, that we may not be driven out of this pleasant land, where we have dwelt since the waters of the flood subsided, and permitted us to crawl out of the crannies of the great ark—yea, ages before the days of Dan, son of Humble—ages before the Cimbri, the Goths, or the Jutes had a name, or came beyond the green rampart of the Danesvark. We are kind and benevolent to all who do not molest us ; but savage and revengeful to those who do. Your Maker is also ours, for when he created men, he also made the happier little Trolds, and a thousand other spirits which such gross eyes as thine cannot see ; but if thou wilt pray to this good Master for us—but not against us—we will never molest thee, nor thy servants, nor followers, even unto the end of time.”

Then the saint promised that he would pray every day for the little Trolds of the land ; and thereupon King Skynde threw up his red cap with joy, and again stamped with his feet. Then two little imps, each about a foot in height, bare-armed and bare-legged, with leather aprons, and beards descending to their knees, and all begrimedmed with smoke and dust (for they had just ascended from some fairy forge far down in the bowels of the earth), appeared, bearing between them a large goblet of gold, and, staggering under its weight, with their leather aprons they gave a last polish to the magnificent chasings which adorned it, and, scrambling down a mole-track, disappeared.

“ Brother Knud,” said the elfin king, with grave majesty, as he placed his hand upon the edge of the cup, which was higher than his girdle, “ take this goblet ; it is one of thousands made by my smiths ; keep it for the first church you build in Holstein ; and rest assured, while it remains in the land of the Slavi, thy good people shall never be molested by the Trolds.”

“ This cup,” continued the priest, “ or one said to be it, is still shown in the convent of St. Knud at Eckernfiörd ; and, whether it be the fairy goblet or not, we must acknowledge that never did mortal hands frame a more magnificent chalice.”

Father Ignatius had just reached this point in his story, when, as we passed Kiel on our left, his eye observed the human

figure still dangling from the lofty spire, with the crows flying in circles round it. With some asperity, he asked the count what this display meant; and Koenigheim, who long before this had recovered his equanimity of mind and calm intrepidity of manner, replied briefly—

“A Dane, whom we strung up as you see, for guiding a night attack.”

The priest expressed great indignation at this unnecessary barbarity.

“Count, count!” said he; “I could have expected better things from you.”

“Nay, good father,” he replied, “do not chide me for this. Condemned by a court-martial, the man was hanged by our provost, who may have exceeded his duty by hanging him higher than usual. But you may order him to be interred the moment you enter Kiel.”

Saying that such ferocities disgraced the armies of the Empire, the priest bade us adieu, and, whipping up his mule, turned off towards Kiel, and his tall figure was long visible as he threaded his way between the neglected fields; for the poor Holsteiners being doubtful who might reap, were omitting to till or sow their fertile land in many places.

Had he continued with us, the priest would have had fresh cause for indignation; for when with our four dragoons we entered Lytjenburg, which a regiment of Imperialists had just quitted, we found one of the magistrates hanging by the neck in the market-place. Here, as elsewhere in Holstein, there stood a bronze figure of Justice, having a sword in one hand, with a rod in the other; and, to a hand of this figure, a lieutenant-colonel of Tilly’s Croatian horse had appended the burgomaster for some real or imaginary insult.

Notwithstanding the rage and horror this had excited among the people, Koenigheim, who was a daring and reckless fellow, rode right through the town (which is one of the most ancient in the duchy), and halted at the door of an inn which bore the sign of *Wildbrat*, the famous dog of Christian I., which proved more faithful than all the king’s courtiers, and thus gave a name and motto to the noblest of Danish orders. Dinner was ordered,

and promptly served up, with the best of Rhenish, Neckar, and Moselle, the former being nearly ninety years old at least, so it was averred by the host, who had not the least idea that he was ever to be paid for the good cheer he was providing. In that, however, he was mistaken, for Kœningheim—an honourable soldier of fortune—paid like a prince; and, after giving refreshments to the four dragoons who had kept guard at the door, we again set forth, and, just as darkness was closing, came in sight of King Christian's outposts by the Kielerfiörd.

The sun had set, enveloped in clouds; there was no moon visible; the cold grey sky had gradually become an inky black one, and the level shore with its bordering woods was shrouded in dusky obscurity; but within cannon-shot of it the Danish fleet were lying at anchor. One mile from the shore, on advantageous ground, the king had formed a strong redoubt, banked up with earth and palisades, mounted with cannon, and garrisoned by a thousand men under his own immediate orders. These men consisted of my own regiment and three companies of Dutch. His fleet protected them on the seaward, and their cannon and situation on a hillock rendered it inaccessible from the landward. On the road to Kiel, and in other directions, he had posted out-guards, and perdues were scattered beyond them.*

From the summit of a knoll over which the roadway wound, and between two thickets of trees, which, together with the darkness of the night, completely concealed us, we could distinctly perceive, far down in the hollow, between us and the redoubt, a guard of soldiers bivouacked round a watch-fire.

Thanking Kœningheim for his kind escort, and expressing regret that I did not possess even a tester to give his dragoons, that they might have a can of Rostock beer on their return, I now begged that he would leave me, being so near my comrades that I could reach them in perfect safety, while to him the vicinity was full of peril. He assented to this, and, after looking at the outpost through his Galileo glass, handed it to me, and I was glad to perceive by it that the soldiers around the watch-fire belonged to my own regiment.

By the red glow which the blazing fire shed on the green

* Out-piquets with advanced sentinels.

trees of an adjacent wood, and the grassy meadow beyond, I could perceive my brave comrades standing in groups, with their steel accoutrements glittering, or rolled in their tartan plaids, and resting on the sward between their piles of arms; while far in front, upon the roadway, were two advanced sentinels, standing motionless and still as they leaned against their pikes, the points of which glittered like red stars in the light of the wavering fire.

"Now, farewell, Koenigheim," said I, dismounting, and handing the bridle of the horse I had ridden to one of the dragoons (for it belonged to the German cavalry), "on foot I can reach the outpost. Remember to perform all you have promised for the rescue of our poor Gabrielle, and thus complete the kindness of a day which I shall never forget."

"By the way," said he, "did you not tell me that you were without money? My purse is at your service. Take it, Captain Rollo, for one cannot have too much of that ware."

I was about to decline, when a sound that came from the thick underwood which surrounded the knoll, made us pause. Koenigheim stooped his head to listen, and the four German troopers blew the fuses of their musketoons.

"A passing wind has rustled the branches," said Koenigheim, shortening his reins.

"Nay," said I, whose Highland ear had been practised in my native forests to every casual sound; "it was the footsteps of men—for I heard the crackle of decayed wood and withered leaves."

"Then *we* are too long here," replied Koenigheim, wringing my hand with honest warmth; "farewell!—I will remember all you have said, and all you wish."

"Ready!" cried a voice among the trees; "guard pangs—present—give fire!"

"Christi Creutz!" cried Koenigheim, as a volley of six muskets streaked with red fire the dark bosom of the coppice, and, struck by six deadly shots, the count and his four German dragoons fell heavily on the turf, while their affrighted horses dashed down the knoll and disappeared. One dragged his rider a considerable way. Then I heard a wild Highland *scraigh*, and

Sergeant Diarmed Macgillvray of Drumnaglas, with a patrol of six musketeers, surrounded me.

I cannot express the grief and indignation this occurrence excited within me. With my own hand I could have slain Drumnaglas, had he not given me a warm embrace, and welcome back—as he said—to life and liberty; and had I not been aware that he mistook the count's escort for a reconnoitring party or patrol of the Imperialists, with a Scottish prisoner whom it was his duty to free; and, with the most perfect Highland *sang froid*, he turned over the slain, one after the other, and shook them, saying—

“ Tead—tead as a herring, too—Got pless us!”

The count still breathed, but a ball had passed through his breast, beating into the wound a portion of his cuirass and buff coat; thus he suffered the most excruciating agony. But as I still hoped he might live, I desired the Highlanders to cross their fatal muskets, and with their plaids laid over the barrels, to form a temporary bier, on which we conveyed him, groaning heavily and bleeding profusely, to the out-guard, where McColl of that Ilk commanded, and from thence to the sconce, where the regiment received me as one who had indeed returned from the dead; for Ian and all the officers had most respectable knots of black crape on their sword-hilts and left arms, in honour of my memory. Even the standard poles had the same grim livery, which was very gratifying to me; as men have seldom an opportunity of beholding the respect paid to their memory when defunct.

“ Tell me, Ian,” said I, when the congratulations had a little subsided; “ has Ernestine heard the rumour of my death?”

“ She believes you to be a prisoner in Kiel.”

“ And these confounded badges of crape—for whom does she believe they are worn?”

“ For the Duke of Pomerania, as I told her.”

“ But old Bagislaus IV. is not dead.”

“ It matters not—his name was the first that occurred to me.”

“ Ah! pray, Ian, go—or send some one to say that I am safe—that I am here, and in a few minutes will be by her side.”

“ Dioul! why not go yourself?”

“ I dread the excess of joy——”

“ Excess of joy never killed any one, whatever excess of grief may do. Ah! if you only loved yourself half so well as you love this dark-eyed woman——”

“ Or as you love Moina,” retorted I; for Ian, though he really admired Ernestine, and considered it a duty to love her as his own kinswoman, had never been altogether able to overcome his first prejudices against her foreign taint, as he called her German accent and her Spanish blood.

“ Moina dwells by Kilchiuman,” said he, “ and her eyes have never looked on other hills than those whose shadows darken the waters of the Oich and Garry. Moina is a daughter of the old race; she has no foreign blood in her veins, or strange accents on her tongue.”

“ But Ernestine is your natural-born kinswoman, and Moina is *not*.”

“ My kinswoman!—well, so she is—blood is warmer than water, and by the Cairn na cuimhne!” said he, tossing up his bonnet, “ I would march to the cannon’s mouth for her; but it is a devil of a pity her mother was a stranger—a Spaniard.”

“ Nay, I think it has been a great improvement on the old Rollo blood; for I am sure that two such beautiful dark eyes were never seen in the old Tower at Cromartie; but while we chatter here like a couple of pyets, poor Koenigheim is enduring, I fear me, the agonies of death.”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DYING SOLDIER.

THE count had been conveyed on board of the *Anna Catharina*, where Dr. Pennicuik examined his wound, and at once declared him to be past all recovery.

As I have much to relate, instead of impertinently thrusting any more love scenes before the reader, I must beseech him or her to imagine all my meeting with Ernestine, and to believe that the keen sense of joy which the poor girl experienced on beholding me again, was considerably abated and tempered by the terrible plight in which her father's oldest and best friend was brought on board of the king's ship.

Phadrig knocked at the cabin door, and with the most soldier-like unconcern announced that the count was dying, and required my presence. Ernestine burst into tears, and threw herself upon her knees to pray, while I hurried along the lower deck (breaking my shins against stray shot, coils of rope, and buckets of wadding) to reach the poor and comfortless berth, in which one of the bravest spirits that ever endued with life a Scottish breast was hovering between Eternity and Time.

As I went into the little cabin, the doctor was coming softly and slowly out, with the air of a man who could do no more. His sleeves were tucked up, and his hands were covered with blood.

"Doctor!" said I; he shook his head, and passed on.

Swinging by a rusty chain from a beam of the main deck, an iron lamp lighted the scene I am about to describe. Its smoky and sickly radiance shed a wavering and yellow gloom on the sloping walls of dark Memel wood, the strong transverse beams, the knotty planks, and iron bolts of the ship; on the brass culverins, which were laid alongside the closed parts, the rammers,

spunges, and other et cetera, beside them; and on the poor pallet spread on the cabin floor, whereon lay Kœningheim, breathing heavily; his features ghastly, and sharpened by pain and loss of blood, and contrasting by their pallor with the blackness of his mustaches and hair, the long cavalier locks of which were scattered over the pillow like those of a girl. His eyes were closed. His fine manly neck and breast were bare, save where the latter was crossed by a bandage, from beneath which the blood was oozing.

Several officers were standing near; Danes in red dresses; Dutchmen in yellow; and two of ours—these were Kildon and Culcraigie, who were as soldier-like as their weatherbeaten visages, grizzled beards, and picturesque costume—steel cuirasses and buff coats laced with silver—could make them. They stood placidly waiting until the poor Scoto-Imperialist should die.

Though I trod lightly, his ear detected the sound as I entered, and knelt down by his side.

“Ah!” said he, opening his eyes; “it is you—I had almost forgotten; but for this exquisite agony I could imagine that a sleep was coming over me. It is the sleep, Rollo—the drowsy sleep—of death!”

I took his hand in mine; alas! it was cold and clammy.

“Count Kœningheim, you wished to speak with me.”

“I have something to tell you,” said he; “something which I do not wish others to hear.”

I looked at Kildon and the group who stood with him; they immediately retired on tiptoe, and closed the cabin door. I was left alone with the dying man, who seemed to be considerably relieved by their absence, and said—

“I will see them all once more; but give me that cup again—the wine-and-water—thank you.”

The draught revived him, and he said with a bitter smile—

“After all my fighting and all my battles, I die in my bed, like other people.”

“Scarcely, Kœningheim, with that frightful wound.”

“I was not always, as you may suppose, Albert Count of Kœningheim,” said he with an effort, and a voice that trembled. “At home, in that dear land I never more shall see, I was but

Habbie Cunningham of the Boortree-haugh, a name which many in the north of Scotland must remember—but, alas! with abhorrence and reprobation. Yet, if you knew all—you would pity me."

He paused, and seemed to be gathering his thoughts; and, as he did so, an expression of dark despair and agony stole over his beautiful face—for it *was* beautiful in its supreme manliness.

"You may know what it is to feel love, and I have felt it too—and rage and hatred; but you can never have known what it is to feel, as I now do, the horrors of remorse. Oh, may you never, never know it!" He grasped my hand convulsively, and fixed upon me his dark and agonized eyes. "I would rather wish that even my worst enemy should die, than do as I have done—and endure what I have endured! Never until this hour have I told my secret to any one; it has been locked in my own breast. I have had none to whom I could confide it, or in whose presence I might without shame shed a tear. Laughter, sleep, drunkenness, the bottle, any thing was welcome, that would make me forget myself; for to be in solitude—to be left for one moment to reflection—was to be in—horror! and thus for thirty years I have borne grief, rankling like a poisoned arrow in my heart."

"Can this be the lion-hearted soldier of the Empire!" thought I.

"I am a murderer—I have been an assassin!" said he, in a low and terrible whisper; "do you not shrink from me?" His eyes closed, for they were full of tears, and thus he did not see the startled expression of my face. "Tears—tears! oh, that they fell on *her* grave! but do not shrink from me," he continued. "(I feel your hand relaxing.) I deserve your pity—rather than your scorn. Ah, yes!—if you knew all—if you only knew all! I have been bad—I have been passionate—wilful—obstinate—imperious! but not for many a long, long year."

"Do not, I beseech you, add to the agonies of the present, by recalling the bitterness of the past."

He was sinking rapidly; the slow, heavy, and painful effort of respiration increased; his lower jaw quivered at times, and then his eye remained fixed, even when he was addressing me.

Never, but in the eyes of the dying, is that wild, imploring, and unearthly glance visible. They seemed larger than usual; brighter and more glistening. On closer examination, I was surprised to find that, since the shot had struck him, he looked much older. Since yesterday his hair had actually become grizzled, and his whole aspect was that of a man bordering on fifty years of age.

“Is it not strange,” said he, “that all the old Scottish prayers my poor mother taught me when a child—prayers which I have never remembered since—are crowding on my mind to-night, and hovering on my tongue, with many of her pious and simple thoughts, just as if her voice had uttered them yesterday, though the flowers of thirty summers have bloomed upon her grave? Those prayers, to me so meaningless when I was a *wee an' wilfu' tot*, find a terrible echo in my heart to-night——”

“Sensibility,” said he, after a long pause, “is often a source of the deepest unhappiness. I have eaten and drunken; I have sung and roistered among my comrades—and that passed for *mirth*, for they knew not my inner heart, and the source of secret sorrow within me. I have often been glad to escape from present thought by rushing into revelry, leaving to the future those mental reproaches that revel was sure to cost me.....I can now look back with pity and contempt on that devil-may-care exterior, which threw a thin veil over my remorse.”

He paused frequently, and his voice sometimes died away; but the night wind, which blew through a chink of an adjacent gunport, re-animated him from time to time.

“Oh! in an hour like this, how awful it seems to see behind me the remembrance of a life misspent, and before me the dim and shadowy future—the horrors—the ages—the uncounted ages & eternity! Oh, yes!” he continued in a voice that was weaker, and broken by many a convulsive sob; “the assumption of a reckless military character humiliated me. Ernestine—poor Ernestine when I am no more, and she has read these papers, will how unworthy I have been of the honour her good fat intended for me.”

With hands that trembled, and frequently failed in their office, he drew from his breast a small horn case about three in

square. It was suspended to his neck by a slender chain of steel; and, opening it, he showed me that it was a book, containing some thirty-five or forty pages, closely filled with writing in a small and distinct hand.

"Take this," said he; "it is the story—the sad secret—of my life. It is, moreover, a memorandum of all I possess, which I leave equally between Ernestine and Gabrielle. I have three estates, two in poor old Scotland, (the best blessings of God and Saint Andrew be on it!) I have a third at Vienna; but I am the last of my race, and have left these girls, whom I have loved as sisters—all—every thing!"

He gave me the volume, which was stained with his blood, (and had been bruised by the death-shot in its passage through his breast,) and then sank back exhausted. A violent shivering passed over his features; I thought he was about to expire, and was hurrying to summon aid, when he rallied, and again begged (what he had thrice before implored) that a Catholic clergyman might be brought to him; but there was no such person to be found either on board the *Anna Catharina*, or within cannon-shot of the Danish posts. This was a source of terrible affliction to poor Kœningheim, who belonged to the ancient faith; and his moans of mental agony were greater than those conduced by the pain of his wound.

After being informed by the weeping Ernestine that all hope of obtaining a priest was over, he never spoke again, but expired just as the ship's bell uttered the first stroke of midnight.

It was a scene that I shall long remember. The yellow gleam of the murky lamp that swung from the deck above; the grim and comfortless cabin, with its starboard cannon; the blood-stained pallet, and the grim corpse that lay upon it, stiffening into the cold, white, and marble rigidity of death. No near or dear hand was there to do the last act of kindness, so his eyes were closed by me. On her knees near the pallet was Ernestine, in tears and prayer—young, beautiful, and with many years before her; while the remains of that gallant and noble, but unhappy and remorse-stricken man, were now only a breathless piece of clay.

To draw Ernestine away from this sad scene; to occupy her

mind; to gratify my own anxiety and curiosity to learn the story of poor Koenigheim, that crime—the terrible memory of which had haunted him through life, which had clouded the brilliancy of his achievements and the splendour of his rank, shedding a horror and a bitterness over his dying hour—I led her into the great cabin, which the royal kindness of Christian had surrendered to her use; and there—after the pause of an hour or so—we examined together the little manuscript book, and read it by turns; for I had but a short time to tarry, as honour and duty required that I should repair to my colours, and command my company in the redoubt upon the shore.

Written as sudden impulses of thought inspired, and in detached pieces, but written with the faint hope that it might fall into the hands of some kind comrade or pitying friend, the little secret manuscript of Koenigheim (or Halbert Cunningham) was a very remarkable—and to me interesting—production; but as the story might seem incoherent as he narrated it, I have told it here partly in my own way, and have used the second person, whereas he wrote in the *first*. The chances that it would never have met a human eye, were as a hundred to one; for it might have been plundered from him on some field of battle by a dead-stripper, or have been buried with him there; and then the secret of his life would have been hidden with him in his bloody and unknown grave.

Much that he relates is part of our Scottish history.

His account of the battle of Glenlivat is among the most succinct and correct I have seen; and, to preserve the unity of the whole, I have placed the secret history of the Count in the Tenth Book of my narrative, instead of an appendix, as I first intended. It shews the terrible circumstances by which he was forced to fly his native country, and seek service and shelter in foreign armies—and, as an outlaw and outcast, to change even his name, lest some of the many Scotsmen who, as soldiers of Fortune, followed the great princes of the German war, might discover him, and remember the dark blot by which, in a fatal moment of recklessness and passion, he had brought ruin and dishonour upon an ancient race and venerated name.

CHAPTER XXII.

COUNT KÖENINGHEIM'S STORY—THE LILY OF CUBLEINE.

FEW kirkyards in Scotland are more solemn or pleasing in aspect, or more romantically situated, than that of Logie, which lies four miles from the river Dee, in the parish of Logie-colstaine, in Aberdeenshire. It once surrounded the kirk of St. Woloc, the bishop and confessor; but every vestige of that ancient fane has now disappeared from the little mound of rich holm land, that rises above the small hills and broad muirs of the district, and from the bosom of which flows a miraculous spring called the Poldow, which yet enjoys a high reputation among the peasantry, for the cures it has wrought since the days when the good bishop blessed it, and rested from his pious labours in Strathdon, Balvenie, and Mar.

On the holm of Logie Kirk, the mouldering tombs, the old headstones—green with moss, or half sunk among the long dog-grass and broad-leaved dockens—the hedges that in summer are white with blossoms of the fragrant hawthorn, and one old gnarled yew, are all indicative of its being an ancient burial-ground. Here and there a broad throchstone, resting on four stunted balusters, spotted by grey lichens, and covered with letters half defaced by mischief or by time, yet remain to indicate where some valiant Knight of Cromar or Laird of the Garioch are lying; while the almost flattened mounds, the small round headstones with unpretending and unlettered fronts, taken perhaps from the bed of the adjacent burn, remain to shew where many a shepherd, patient, poor and God-fearing, and many a brave forester of Culbleine, who hacked and hewed, burned and shot as his laird or leader commanded him; harrying the lands of the Gordons to day, and besieging the towers of the Leslies to-morrow—with many a *bien bonnet* laird, stern in purpose, unflinching

as Brutus, and true to Scotland's kirk and king—yea, true as the steel of his good broadsword—are mouldering, or have mouldered into dust.

Rest them, God!

On the green velvet bank which slopes up from a little tributary of the Davinloch—a place where the winter grass grows rank, but where the white daisies spot the summer turf—are two long gravestones lying side by side, and somewhat apart from all the rest.

They cover the graves of two lovers.

Every person who passes through Cromar (as that part of Aberdeenshire is named) is taken to see them, for there is a sad story connected with them—a story which, to this hour, throws an occasional dash of sentimentality over the village girls and bonneted ploughmen, and which was long the theme of many a sad and many a dirge-like song. One of those stones was inscribed with a legend which I cannot give here, as Kœningheim's handwriting became so tremulous as to be illegible. On the other is carved a Scottish sword, with the words :

Heir lyis Kenneth Logie—an honorabill man.

The history of these sequestered tombs, is the history of Kœningheim's misfortunes and his crime.

In the sixteenth century, nearly the whole property of the now suppressed parish of Logie, in Mar, belonged to two families, the Gordons of Colstaine, and the Donaldsons of Culbleine—a vast forest. The dwelling of the former, named the Moat of Colstaine, was a strong square fortalice, surrounded by a barbican wall, which stood in the midst of a morass, not far from the little kirkyard holm which I have just described. A river (now shrunk to a runnel) washed this barbican on one side; a wet ditch defended it on the other.

The residence of the Donaldsons was an old Scottish manor-house or Place, having grated windows with loopholed-sills, vaulted apartments, and turrets at the angles. It stood among some fine old sycamores and oaks, on the moorland; and now my

reader's eye may rest on the three leading features of the parish of Logie, as they appeared in the year of grace 1594; the grey old kirk of St. Woloc, with its graves dotting the green holm, its buttressed wall begirt with hawthorn hedges, and shaded by dark yew-trees, where the gled croaked by day and the owl screamed by night; lower down on the waterside, the strong tower with its broad chimneys and stone roofs, its grated casements and corbelled rampart; the great *dule-tree* before its gate—an ash that was seldom without its "tassel," in the shape of a thief from the south, or a Forbes hung in his *boots*, as the good people phrased it then; the old baronial manor on the lea, half hidden among dark green copsewood, with the smoke of its hall and spence, kitchen, bake and brewhouses ascending into the air.

In those days, the minister of the Kirk, the gudeman of the Place, and the laird of the Tower, were the three undoubted dignitaries of the parish; and when we remember that it was an age when the minister was (in his own estimation) a greater man than ever Cardinal Beaton dared to be; when the gudeman brought four-and-eighty horsemen, "weel boden in effeir of war," to the sheriff's quarterly Weaponshow; and that the laird marched thrice that number, and had moreover the power of sending half the country-side to pit or gallows, it must be allowed that the power of these three potentates in 1594, was infinitely greater than that enjoyed now by the Premier Duke of Scotland.

Let us go back twenty years.

In the year 1574, when our story opens, the family at the Tower consisted of the Lady Marjorie and her son, a boy of five or six years of age. His father had been seized by one of those fits of wandering, which so frequently possessed the Scottish noblesse of that and after times; and, with two hundred stout pikemen, he had joined the Border legion of Sir Walter Scott of Buccleugh, and died in his armour fighting—not for religion, as the laird, honest man! cared very little about that—but for honour and glory, on the walls of Namur. Some domestic quarrel—a sudden fit of spleen at his lady—was urged in the parish as the reason of his departing from his quiet little tower among the moors of Cromar, to fight the ferocious Spaniards under

Ferdinand of Toledo; for though Dame Marjorie was a stanch Catholic (being a daughter of Halbert Cunningham of the Boortree-haugh in Glencairn), the laird had heard Knox preach in his youth, and thought he was a Calvinist. Thus it was a dreich and doleful day, when a startled servitor of the Tower announced in the morning that a branch had been found at the foot of the dule-tree which overshadowed the gate.

Whenever a Gordon of Colstaine died, this old tree, like the oak of Dalhousie, dropped one of its loftiest branches.

There was sore mourning in the solitary tower, for by that mysterious warning the lady knew she was a widow, and that the father of her little boy had fallen, fighting against her faith and the creed of his ancestors; but for many a month no certain tidings came from that land, which has been so often the grave of the Scottish soldier, until Jock of the Cleugh, a pikeman who had followed the laird, came limping up to the barbican gate, with a light purse and heavy heart, and a tattered doublet, to tell Lady Marjorie how he had been one of that brave Border band, who had laid her husband in his narrow bed before the gate of Saiute Alban.

Old Jock of the Cleugh went no further than the Moat of Colstaine; for he deposited his crutches by the hall fire, and from thenceforward became one of the principal personages in the household, though he spent his whole time in drinking usquebaugh, flourishing his staff, and rehearsing tales of the laird's prowess and his own, and the valiant deeds of the Scottish Borderers, the bulwark of Flanders, and terror of the Spaniards. He taught the stable-boys many a point of farriery they had never known before, and the trenchermen many a trick with the dice, by which, however, they always lost, and he always won; but he shewed them how to pick the lock of the butler's pantry, to broach wine-casks without drawing the spigot; to train hawks, and to tell fortunes on cards; but his principal pupil was young Halbert Gordon, the son and heir of his umquhile leader. Partaking less of his mother's gentle nature, than his father's lofty spirit, the boy was froward, passionate, and bold; and thus, by the time he was ten years of age, Jock of the Cleugh, who found him an apt scholar, had quite

unfitted the little fellow for living a quiet life, or adopting a peaceable avocation.

He had taught him to ride the wildest horses in the barony without bridle or saddle, and at full speed ; he had taught him to handle a sword twice the length of himself, and to discharge a deadly shot, with arblast or arquebuse—to scour armour, sharpen blades, cast bullets, and make up bandoliers of powder. But there were many other features in the education acquired from this wooden-legged preceptor, which were more exceptionable ; for he learned to drink “ to a bluidy war,” in a tass of raw usquebaugh, without once winking ; to make faces at Mr. Jowler during sermon, to steal his apples, and shoot his hens ; to “ cock his eye ” at the dairymaid, and swear a few round oaths in High Dutch or Low Country Spanish, which had the double advantage of being more expressive than our plain Scottish, and less expensive, being evasions of the act by which swearers and banners come under the claws of the kirk-session ; in short, under the tutelage of this old, one-legged and one-eyed, red-visaged, hard-drinking, swearing and storming veteran of the Flemish wars, young Halbert Gordon grew up a little desperado ; and, as he increased in years, his ferocious disposition, and dangerous skill in using his hands, made him the aversion of all the young lairds, his companions, and a source of secret fear to all the little ladies in the neighbourhood.

The family of Donaldson at the Forest, consisted also of a widow, whose husband had left her with one daughter, the heiress of the old manor and all its pertinents. With her there also dwelt the son of a deceased sister, little Kenneth Logie, a poor and penniless orphan, who had no home save that which his kind aunt offered him ; for his father, a ruined laird of Cromar, had fallen in a raid between the Earl of Mar and the Forbeses.

Isolated as those widows were in that sequestered district, there was no intercourse between them, and no community of feeling. The lady of the Moat was a strict Catholic, though her husband had fought against the gory banner of the *Custigador* of Flanders. In her girlhood, she had heard Abbot Quentin Kennedy preach ; and her father had seen the body of the

great cardinal, hung naked and bleeding from the battlements of St. Andrews.

The lady of the Forest, the widow of umquhile John Donaldson, was a rigid Calvinist, and looking upon all Catholics with due aversion, gave the lady of the moated tower the utmost possible space when they met at the weaponshows, the burrow-town market, or on the horseway, lest their fardingales should touch; for each thought there was more than mortal contamination in the person of the other. The Calvinist was "a heretic;" the Catholic "an idolater;" and yet the poor for thirty miles round were wont to aver, that two women more beneficent, gentle-hearted, and amiable, within their own domestic circles, than the ladies of the Tower and Forest, could not be found in the kingdom of Scotland. The mischievous fulminations of the Reverend Maister Jowler, the parish pastor, on one hand, and those of Father Ogilvie (a wandering priest of the Scottish mission), on the other, had left nothing undone to foster this unhappy state of local politics, and their adverse advices fanned the flames of discord, till the aversion and jealousy of the two brocaded and high-heeled dames extended downward through all their dependants. Thus we can compare the two estates of Colstaine and Culbleine only to two countries — a Catholic and a Protestant — in a state of watchfulness, and prepared for instant war. Very little would have brought the "heretics and idolaters" to blows; for if old Jock of the Cleugh with his wooden-leg, was ready to advance at the head of the Catholics, from the mosses and moorlands, on one side; the aged butler of Culbleine, who had shouldered a pike in 1559, and lost an eye at the memorable siege of Leith (fighting against M. d'Essé Epainvilliers, colonel-general of the French infantry in the service of the Scottish queen), was ready, on the other, to march at the head of the Calvinists; thus it required all the terror of the sheriff and his deputies to keep peace in the parish between the rival powers. But there were three little personages in this community, who, for a time at least, had no share in those religious heartburnings.

These were the little heiress of the Forest, her cousin, Kenneth Logie, and Halbert Gordon of the Tower. When Lily Donald-

son was ten, and the boys two years older, they had frequently met in their rambles, and by meeting became playmates. Little Lily had bright blue eyes, and fair hair; she was light, happy, smiling, and seemed like a beautiful fairy—though there never was a fairy, so round, so noisy, and so full of fun and laughter; but Kenneth was a grave and quiet boy, with a mild eye and gentle voice, a pale and thoughtful brow.

Old people were wont to tap him on the head, and say he was like his mother.

Then Kenneth would bend his calm inquiring eyes on their's, and wonder what like *this* mother was; for he had never known any other parent than the mother of Lily. Though their chance companion, Halbert Gordon (a dark-eyed and black-haired boy), was a model of strength and health, he was neither stronger nor healthier than Kenneth, but was more rash, proud, passionate and resentful, than any boy in Cromar; and, as he rose in years, those troublesome propensities waxed strong within him, and grew with his growth. When his haughty mother, or Jock of the Cleugh, desired him to finish his prayers by a malediction on “all obstinate heretics,” he always made a mental reservation in favour of his secret friends at the Forest—fair Lily Donaldson, and her quiet cousin, Kenneth Logie.

Now it happens that the little people of this world will have their little love dreams, as well as those who consider themselves men and women, but are only grown children after all; and thus a secret sympathy expanded in the hearts of little Kenneth and his pretty cousin—a sympathy which Lily's mother (who loved her dead sister's son as if he were her own) left nothing undone to fasten; and it strengthened fast this charming and childish love.

They were ever together, and were never known to quarrel. In that lonely pastoral district, all their amusements and objects were centred in each other; for save the dark, sullen boy of the moated Tower, they knew no other companion, and even *he* was known to them only by stealth.

Kenneth had no secrets from Lily, and Lily knew neither wish nor hope, a sorrow or a joy, in which “cousin Kenneth” did not participate. They seemed to have but one heart between

them. The garden of the Place, with its closely clipped and gigantic yew hedges bordering grass walks (in the Scoto-French fashion), the fish-pond and the terraces, were the boundaries of the Eden they inhabited.

They knew of no land that lay beyond the blue hills of Strathdon, which seemed to them the verge of the habitable world. They indulged in visions, and what little people do not? Lily saw herself a great lady riding on a white palfrey, whose footcloth swept the ground; Kenneth saw himself the provost of a city—the general of an army—the laird of a noble barony—a belted earl, addressing the three estates in defence of the church, the laws, and liberties of Scotland. These airy castles faded away at nightfall, but were as brilliantly rebuilt in a thousand happy forms at their meetings next day. They were ever together, as we have said, and year after year, as it passed over their fair young brows, found them still wreathed with smiles.

The old lady of the Forest and the Lea, when she saw their curly heads nestling in the same plaid, would often bless them, and say,—

“ My puir bairns, ye were just made for ilk ither!”

And the old servitors of the Place loved to call them their “young laird and leddy—man and wife,” and were wont to foretell that one day they would become so.

Then the little pair looked with wonder into each other’s bright eyes, marvelling what “man and wife” meant, but resolving that, whatever it *did* mean, they would not and could not love each other the less, or be less happy than they were; but would still hunt bees and butterflies, gather hare and heather bells, and make little chapels and houses in the green haughs, when the hawthorn bloomed in summer.

The round of their pleasures was small, and the *little chapel*—nathless the Reformation—was still a favourite amusement with the children of Scotland, as it is now with those of continental countries. Thus, a mimic altar was set up, with a cross and candles thereon; a circle of stones formed its precinct; Halbert Gordon was the officiating priest, and little Lily his whole congregation, and very devout she was; but without the circle of

this baby chapel Kenneth Logie would stand doubtfully aloof, for his aunt and grim Master Jowler had taught him to abhor such things, and, less compliant than the gentle Lily, he dreaded Catholicism as burned children dread the fire.

The banks of the kirk-burn, whose ceaseless waters came out of the distant woods, and whose far off source was one of wonder to their infant minds, reflected every day their smiling faces as they wove fairy caps among the rushes, or set fleets of bluebells floating down its current; but the bold young baron of the moated Tower led them elsewhere, for he shewed Kenneth where the golden eagle and the dark osprey built their nests in the perpendicular rocks of Baud-kroskie; and where the fierce fiumart nursed its red cubs among the ivy-covered holes, daring him to climb with his dagger in his teeth, to rob the former and slay the latter.

Then, when Kenneth modestly declined, the reckless Gordon, with a triumphant glance at the little lady, and a laugh of scorn and derision, would clench his poniard in his strong white teeth, and grasping the weeds, the ivy, the rocks, or bushes, would ascend the steep cliffs like a squirrel, with the clouds and mist above, and the waters of the Dee flowing deep and dark below, while the two cousins held their breath with terror, as they watched him. Then the eagle would be seen to fly from its eyry with a shriek, and, torn from its bed, the nest would fall at the feet of Lily; or at times she was still more terrified by a fox or a fiumart rolling down the rocks, drenched in its blood. Then came Halbert Gordon, descending with the rapidity of an evil spirit, with his cheek flushed and his eyes on fire, to laugh at Lily's terror and Kenneth's timidity; to exult in his own superior daring—to exhibit his bloody poniard, and say tauntingly—

“I will be a brave leal knight, even as my father was; but you, Master Kenneth, may weel become a monk, and snuffle Latin in Logie Kirk.”

Though less rash and vindictive, Kenneth was a brave boy, too; and his heart swelled with secret passion at these open taunts. Thus, by degrees, the fierce little chieftain of the Tower learned to despise him, and, as their years increased, he took every op-

portunity of endeavouring to lessen Kenneth in the estimation of his cousin. The boys often quarrelled; but, boylike, they just as often became apparent friends again. Kenneth Logie respected and even loved Gordon for his bravery; but feared his proud and passionate temper. Gordon admired Kenneth's skill as a deadly shot with the arquebuse and pistolette, but despised his caution; while Lily instinctively loved her cousin, and feared their companion, though *he* loved her well, for her exceeding gentleness, her obliging disposition, and the grace with which she said and did all those pretty nothings, which are as pleasing in the artless little girl as in the winning and well-bred woman.

Time passed on.

The boys became youths, both tall and strong; while the fair wild-bud that blossomed in the Forest of Culbleine, was daily unfolding some new charm as it expanded into beauty and bloom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE COUSINS.—THE STORY CONTINUED.

MANY years had glided thus away.

The summer of 1594 was at hand. Kenneth Logie was then twenty years of age, and his cousin was two years younger. Kenneth, a handsome and athletic lad, excelled in all the manly sports and exercises necessary to complete the education of a Scottish gentleman. But Lily! The bud had become a rose, the pretty child a beautiful woman; mild and happy, merry or pensive, by turns. Lily, in her eighteenth year, had indeed become the Lily of Logie—the Lily of the many songs in which her memory has been embalmed. Heaven never created a being more beautiful!

There are some women whom we admire for their dazzling skin; for their fine hair, or their sparkling eyes; for their dimpled hands, their handsome ankles, or their necks of snow; but in every point of form and feature fair Lily was admirable. She was one of those magnificent beings that appear but once in a century. She was then the wonder, as she is still the boast, of all Cromar and the Garioch.

Her violet-coloured eyes were soft and brilliant, but their lashes were of the darkest brown; and her hair was of that bright hue which alternates between auburn and gold, like the tresses attributed to Venus, or to Scotland's martyred Mary. Her feet and hands were small, but beautifully proportioned, and nothing could be more alluring than the sound of her sweet voice; nothing more attractive than the happy vivacity and brilliance of her manner, which was full of pretty retort and merry repartee.

Cousin Kenneth felt conscious that she was more than beautiful—that she was supremely innocent and good; and he loved her with

a quiet depth of passion, which, as it was based on the most perfect feeling of security, knew no warp or interruption in its current. Though he still called her his "dear little wifie," a change had, of course, come over them since he had first been taught to say so; for now the time approached when she was to become—as he said—"his dear little bride in earnest."

Kenneth Logie was, more than ever, all the world to Lily! Save Halbert Gordon, she had never been intimately acquainted with any other man; and, though he was eminently handsome, there was a something in his air and in his aspect, that made her shrink from the man still more than she had shrunk from the boy. Yet Halbert was not without many external graces; he had a swarthy cheek and a dark fierce eye, with a strong and well knit figure. He carried a sword, which he used as if he had been born with it; he could ride the wildest horses, break the strongest lances, throw the heaviest hammers, and hit the most distant targets with the arrow or bullet; but there was a certain air about him, somewhat between the soldier and the bravo, that Kenneth never cared to imitate. Being laird of the moated Tower he was a lesser baron, and head of a branch of the house of Huntly, while poor Kenneth was but a penniless orphan, and in right of his future wife was destined to be merely the gudeman of Culbleine.

At county meetings, at weaponshows, at kirk or market, wherever Halbert presented himself, with a falcon on his dexter thumb, a sword and dagger in his belt, a velvet mantle dangling on his left shoulder; his doublet covered with lace, his bombasted trunk breeches and gold spurs, his bonnet slouched over his fierce and devil-may-care dark eyes—he enforced respect, and completely overshadowed the less assuming, but assuredly not less brave, Kenneth Logie, who was inoffensive and quiet, as the other was offensive and quarrelsome. Gordon was rakish and libertine; so old Jock of the Cleugh had every reason to be satisfied with his pupil, whom he had trained up in the path which he thought most proper for a gentleman and soldier to pursue. Thus, in his twentieth year, Gordon's stormy and licentious manners, together with his fierce disposition, made him a terror and a proverb in the quiet and pastoral district of Cromar.

Save in occasional rides or chance walks, he never now saw the Lily of Culbleine; for, although the chimneys of their dwellings were visible from each other's windows, difference of faith, and certain dark rumours, political and religious, which were then floating through Scotland, made still wider that gulf between "Catholic and Presbyterian" which had always separated their mothers as aliens and enemies. In short, an armed insurrection of the Scottish Catholics, to co-operate with a Spanish invasion of England, and to avenge the murder of Queen Mary, was hourly expected; and James VI., with the Calvinists of the kingdom, were watchful and on the alert. Thus, Gordon, though he cared not a rush for religion or any thing else when a pretty woman was concerned, was restrained from visiting as a man, the scenes where he had played as a boy, for his haughty soul could not brook the idea of being an intruder. In a word, this wild gallant loved Lily as he hated Kenneth, with his whole heart and his whole soul.

A region of fierce and sudden impulses, his breast knew but two sentiments; for one cousin, love—for the other, hatred; and both these sentiments were the offspring of an indomitable pride. The jealousy of the sullen boy had become the settled hatred of the haughty man; and the age was one when the bold Scot owned no laws save those which the heart dictated and the sword enforced.

In the gloomy solitude of his mother's Tower he brooded over these things, and envied Kenneth the society of a being so beautiful and so winning; for he knew—to his agony—that the cousins were ever together, where whilome they had played in childhood—that they read the same books—that they had still but one heart and one soul between them. The children had grown up into lovers, and he knew that, to them, a third companion would be intolerable.

Full of bitterness as these thoughts swelled up in his fiery and resentful heart, he would leap on horseback and gallop towards the Forest or the Lea, in the hope of obtaining a glimpse of Lily; and when he did see her—

"A thousand furies!" he would exclaim, and abruptly turn his horse; "that puling ass is ever by her side!" Once he

reined in his horse by the margin of the *Dee*, that it might drink of the gurgling stream. The place was beautiful. Cool and dark, deep and still, the river glided over its brown pebbles, and scarcely a sunbeam reached it through the thick foliage of that leafy glen, for overhead the trees entwined their branches like the arches of a vast cathedral; and the coo of the cussat-dove, or the voice of the mavis alone woke the echoing dingles. From gazing dreamily at the trout darting in the calm depth of the summer pool, the sound of voices made Gordon raise his head, and lo!

Kenneth Logie and his cousin Lily approached.

So full were they of themselves, and their own sweet conversation, that they never perceived Halbert, who, motionless as an equestrian statue, remained gazing at them with eyes that, like his heart, were full of fire. Fair Lily wore a dress of light blue silk, that charmingly became her bright and pure complexion; it had little white slashes, inlet at the shoulders; the wide and hanging sleeves displayed her dimpled elbows, and the snowy whiteness of her arms; she carried her hood in one hand, the other rested on the arm of Kenneth; and her hair, which fell like a shower of gold upon her neck and bosom, swept over his shoulder, when at times their heads were bent together. The sunbeams, as they darted through the summer foliage, gave an additional lustre to her hair and eyes; and, when she spoke or smiled, her mouth, from time to time, revealed the whiteness of her close and well set teeth.

The handsome youth who walked by her side seemed fully worthy of this alluring girl, for his tall strong figure appeared to the utmost advantage in a suit of green velvet, laced with Venetian gold; a black feather drooped from his bonnet; he had a rapier in his belt and a falcon on his wrist. Another sat on the hand of Lily, and the lovers were laughing merrily as they flirted their birds, making them peck at each other, scream, and flap their wings; for an old chronicler tells us, that at the Scottish court he was considered the most finished gallant who could make his falcon play most tricks with the falcon of a lady.

Their thoughts were wholly of that nearer and dearer relationship which they were soon to bear unto each other; and

as Lily bent her pure white brow towards Kenneth's sunburnt cheek, she said more than once—

“ Oh, cousin Kenneth! are we not the happiest beings in the world?”

“ In our love for each other, we are, dearest Lily!”

“ In every thing,” and Kenneth assented by a kiss.

Their conversation was made up of those little nothings which are so charming to lovers, but which will neither bear to be written nor rehearsed.

These were as molten lead to the heart of the unhappy Gordon; and when he saw Lily smiling with joyous confidence as her favoured lover painted many a vision of happiness to come, he felt that with all his love—a love the stronger by its very hopelessness—he could have cursed her.

Like a vision they passed before him, and disappeared down a vista of the wood. His horse, which had raised its head as they passed, was again drinking placidly; the river was running on; the trees were rustling their green leaves overhead; but the miserable man remained as one entranced, and the sound of their voices—one so charming, the other so hateful—seemed to linger in his ear long after they were gone.

So much were they absorbed in each other, that they had never once observed him; and his suit, which was of scarlet laced with silver, was, he thought, assuredly conspicuous enough. Rage and fury filled his heart! But he had learned something of importance from their conversation as they passed, and on that information he resolved to act.

At six o'clock that evening, Lily Donaldson was to visit the miln of Newton on a mission of kindness to the miller's wife, who was suffering under a grievous illness; Kenneth was to meet her at the haugh by Deeside as she returned. Full of desperate and despairing thoughts, Gordon resolved to anticipate the lover, and, forcing his horse across the stream, he urged it up the steep and wooded bank, where never horse or man had ascended before, and rode straight back to his Tower among the morasses.

The bridge was up and the gates were shut, and such were the precautions taken to prevent ingress and surprise, that even he had some trouble in gaining admittance.

“What the devil is astir now—an English invasion? speak—thou—Jock of the Cleugh!” he said angrily, on seeing that the whole place was in the hurry of warlike preparation; that the barbican was strewn with swords and lances; that twenty horses showed their barbed heads at their stable doors, as if chiding his delay; that every man in the tower was busy in the refurbishment of steel bonnets and corslets, or grinding pike-heads, sword-blades, and daggers.

“The Lords Argyle and Huntly are in arms,” said Jock in a low whisper, as he limped close to his master, “and sae the Grole o’ the Garioch maun mount and ride, ye ken.”

“Right, Jock! God’s heavy malison be on him who lingers in joining the gay Gordons!”

“The cock o’ the north for ever!” added Jock, flourishing his wooden leg.

The fierce heart of young Gordon leaped with joy at these tidings. He had long looked for them; “and now the hour had come when he hoped,” as he said, “to ride above his bridle in the blood of the accursed Calvinists,” all of whom he embodied in the idea of Kenneth Logie. Ascending to the hall, which formed the first floor of the Tower, he found his stern and enthusiastic mother, excited by vengeful and religious hopes, in close council with Father Ogilvie, an itinerant priest of the Scottish mission, who, while encountering innumerable perils and the most severe poverty, travelled in disguise from one Catholic family to another. Garbed as a peasant, and looking like a burly farmer from the braes of Angus, in a canvass doublet and grey plaid, the priest was covered with dust, and, by the mud on his gambadoes, seemed to have ridden both fast and far that day.

“Joy, my son, Halbert—joy!” said his mother, while her eyes flashed fire.

“Welcome, my bairn,” said the priest affectionately.

“So Huntly is in arms,” said the young chieftain, with a kindling eye; “and is ready to sweep from Scottish ground the accursed brood of Knox and Calvin.”

“Nay, my bairn,” replied the old priest; “’tis Argyle who is in arms, with the Campbells, the Grants, and M’Gregors, 12,000

strong, and these are about to pour like a torrent down upon the Catholic lords. Thus, if all to whom the cross and the cause of Heaven are dear, delay to join Lord Huntly, the church of our fathers will sink even lower than Knox and Wishart levelled it."

"Halbert," said his mother, whose fierce spirit—for she was a Borderer—snuffed blood from afar; "in three hours ye will have twenty horsemen in their harness, and prepared to march."

"'Tis well," he replied through his clenched teeth, as he selected a sword and carbine from among the many that hung upon the wall; "but one word, good Father Ogilvie, where is the Lord Huntly's trysting-place?"

"His castle of Strathbogie, in the Garioch."

"In three hours then, mother, I will ride, to conquer or die with our chief and our kinsmen."

There was a ghastly smile on Halbert's lips, and a deep and dire intent was visible in his dark eyes, as he proceeded with the utmost care to fix a match in his carbine, and hummed the while a surly song—

"When the Grole o' the Garioch
Meet the bowmen of Lord Mar;
Upon the hill of Bennochie,
The Grole shall win the war!"

Ha—ha! mother, does not the old song say so?"

"My brave boy, I see there is determination on your brow," said the stern matron, as she kissed her haughty son.

"Yea, madam," said he, grinding his teeth, and with a voice that made even her start; "victory, vengeance, and death are in my heart."

The trysting-place beside the Dee was a most sequestered spot. In all the windings of that beautiful river, by haugh and strath, there was not a lonelier. Among the dense summer foliage of the old beech-trees, around whose gnarled trunks the thick dark ivy clambered, the cushat-doves were still cooing, while the black mavis and the merry merle sang on their topmost boughs. Among rocks overhung by the clustering Gueldre-roses, the sweet brier and the fragrant honeysuckle, the deep blue Dee was jarring in tiny waves, that every rock and pebble fretted into little bells of foam; while, numerous as the stars of the sky, the

yellow buttercups, the wild violets, and white gowans spangled the bright green grass on which the dew was falling thick and fast; for it was evening now, and the last rays of the sun were giving a farewell gleam on the clustered chimneys of the old mansion of Culbleine, and the older spire of Logie kirk. The murmur of the gliding water, and the rustle of the shady branches, the perfume of the summer flowers, the voices of the happy birds, and the partial glimpses of the evening sun, all combined to make beautiful the trysting-place where fair Lily was to meet her lover-cousin, as she returned from the miln of Newtoun.

On her arm hung a little basket, in which she had conveyed to the sick wife of the miller the various comfits and medicaments the good old lady her mother had so carefully prepared. Her plaid, though fastened under her chin by a silver brooch, had fallen from her head, and permitted a shower of curls to fall over her shoulders—those golden curls, such as the early painters would have adored. There was a bloom on her rounded cheek, for exercise had imparted a rosy tinge to it, and a rich red to her smiling lip; while a clear light sparkled in her deep violet eyes, as she reached the place of tryst, and looked anxiously round for her lover.

“Kenneth!” she exclaimed, on seeing a tall cavalier leaning against the well-known tree, with a feather drooping over his eyes, and a mantle dangling over his left arm, which rested on the muzzle of a carbine; “dear Kenneth!”

He turned abruptly, and she beheld the olive face and dark glittering eyes of Halbert of the Tower.

“I am not Kenneth Logie,” said he courteously, raising his bonnet as he slightly kissed her hand; “may I hope that I am not the less welcome to fair Lily of the Forest?”

“Oh, no!” said she, concealing the terror with which his presence inspired her; “why should you be unwelcome? Are you not my old playmate, and, save Kenneth, the oldest friend I have known?”

Gordon stamped his foot at the name of his rival.

“And as your playmate in older and happier times, fair Lily, I now come to bid you adieu; for I am going far from the woods

of Logie and Culbleine, and all those scenes around which your presence casts a charm."

"For Flanders, where your poor father went before you?" she asked, with a mixed feeling between sorrowful interest and joy at this good riddance to the district; "to the wars of Low Germanie?"

"Nay—to wars certainly, but not so far off," he replied, with a deep smile.

"And you came to bid me adieu, my poor old friend! It is so kind of you, Master Halbert; but," she added suspiciously, "how knew you that I should be here at this hour?"

"Surely it was intuition, Lily—some happy, some divine presentiment!" He paused with something like confusion, and she glanced anxiously along the shady forest vista by which she expected Kenneth Logie to approach. Gordon drew off his long leather gauntlet, and took her soft small hand in his.

"He is going far away," she thought, and did not withdraw it.

"Lily," said he, "where I am going, and on what errand, matters not at present, for anon you will know all; but it is a mission of secrecy, of danger, and of death—one from which I may never return; and I could not leave these, our native woods and glen, the hawthorn barks, and the bonnie brae of Logie, without saying how long, how well, and how deeply I have loved you—yea, loved you, Lily, from my boyhood upward. I cannot go forth, to die perhaps, with this long-treasured secret in my heart. I could not fall in battle happily, and have it buried with me, unconfessed, untold, and unheard. I know all you would urge," he added, sighing deeply, and speaking hurriedly; "Kenneth, your cousin—yes, yes—all say you love him; but such attachments should not be—they are within degrees forbidden by *the church*; moreover, I cannot believe it! Oh! think well of the love I have to offer. Kenneth is the penniless orphan of a dowerless bride, and a poor younger son. In this world he possesses nothing; I am a lesser baron, with an estate here and another in Glencairn—my mother's inheritance. I can summon a hundred horsemen in time of need. The Lords of Badenoch, the Earls of Huntly and of Mar, have quartered their shields with mine; and in the storm which is at hand,

when a sword may be in every Catholic hand, with its point at every Calvinist throat, you may find a worse protector than Halbert of the Tower; but nowhere in broad Scotland will ye find a better. Ponder, dearest Lily, over all I have said, for I must soon be gone, as time and tide will wait for no man."

Lily trembled excessively; she became pale, and endeavoured to release her hand from Gordon's, but his grasp tightened, and she struggled in vain.

"Think, think!" he continued; "think, Lily, from being the daughter of a bonnet-laird, a mere Gudeman of the Wood, I can make you a lady of that Ilk, and on the nameless bestow one of the best names in all the brave north countrie."

"Halbert Gordon," replied Lily with some asperity, "my father's name is as good as yours; and the wise Regent called him ever his leal man and true in the Douglas' wars."

"James Stuart—pho! a heretic and regicide!"

"He who speaks slightingly of my father's friends involves my father's honour, and cannot love me," replied Lily, endeavouring to free her hand.

"Thou wrongest me, and art unnecessarily angry, dearest Lily. I mean not to slight the gudeman, thy father's memory; but thou hast not yet answered me."

"Sir, I cannot answer while you detain me thus."

Gordon's dark eyes began to sparkle.

"You scorn me then—*you?*"

"Nay, nay, Heaven forbid! but remember, that even if I could love you—which is impossible—our religion—our religion! thou a Catholic—I a Calvinist!"

Gordon uttered a bitter laugh.

"Fair Lily," said he; "a time is coming (yea, it is at hand!) when such marriages will be as a boon from God to the accursed brood of Knox and Calvin—of Rough and Wishart; but once more, dearest Lily, hear me——"

"Impossible—impossible!"

"I am going far away from these green woods, from Strathdon and Strathdee, and I will have nothing of thee—of thee, I have loved so long to look upon. Give me but a tress, a ringlet,

however small; a riband, a glove—a rag, a shred—oh Lily, Lily!—if you knew how I have loved you!"

" Halbert Gordon, it is improper to give such a gift—and impossible, too—"

" And why is it either improper or impossible?" he asked suddenly, confronting her with a cold and imperious aspect.

" Because," replied Lily, who trembled while she resented this lofty bearing; " because my heart is no longer my own, and oh, Halbert! you know that well."

Though this was quite the answer he expected, anguish distorted the brow, and fury glared in the eyes of Gordon; for there was something intensely exasperating in hearing such an avowal from her own beautiful lips. His mouth was compressed, and his dark eyes regarded her fixedly with a gloomy scrutiny.

Footsteps were heard approaching, and the clear clank of Rippon spurs, that jangled as the wearer strode through the echoing glade. A joyful expression spread over the face of fair Lily; but a spasm shot through the heart of Gordon, for he knew that he was no longer wanted there, and that Kenneth Logie approached.

Unable to confront this young man otherwise than as an enemy, and still more unable to endure his meeting with Lily, Gordon bestowed upon her a deep and inexplicable smile; threw his carbine into the hollow of his left arm, and, crossing the Dee, though its waters came up to his waist-belt, sprang up the opposite bank, and disappeared among the thick coppice that covered it.

" Fie, cousin Kenneth!" said Lily playfully, as she tapped him on the cheek with her pretty hand; " is it thus ye keep tryst?"

Kenneth had been late in meeting her, and, as he had not seen Gordon when approaching, he proposed that they should seat themselves by the bank of the stream to converse a little; and, agitated as she had been by her recent painful interview, fair Lily gladly consented.

On the grassy brae, with the still water flowing at their feet, and the hawthorn spreading its white and fragrant branches above them, they conversed in low tones, with long pauses, for they were wrapped in the purest and dearest of dreaming. Lily soon forgot the terrible, the fixed regards of Halbert Gordon.

They knew not—those happy lovers—that from the opposite bank, and scarcely a pistol-shot distant, two fierce eyes were watching them.

I have said that Kenneth Logie was handsome, strong, and active; the bloom of twenty years was on his cheek, and his fine figure was displayed to advantage by the Scoto-French costume of the Lowlands. His blue velvet bonnet lay beside him, and his high white forehead, around which the dark hair curled in heavy locks, was bare. He was all that a young girl dreams of in her future lover; and his eyes, by turns expressive of pride, tenderness, and impetuosity, were bent fondly on the golden-haired fairy that sat by his side—she, whose ringlets poured like a shower upon his breast, and whose soft violet eyes were raised to his, from time to time, with appeals of confiding tenderness; for he was the friend of her earliest memory, and all her affections, and all her thoughts and hopes, were entwined with his idea and his name.

And so it was with Kenneth; for the opinions, the feelings, the sentiments of Lily, had ever been but the mirror of his own; and again and again, by those glances which never pencil drew nor pen portrayed, he told her that she was dearer to him than all the world beside.

So they dreamed on, this pure and happy pair of loving hearts; the old oaks shook their rustling leaves above them; the hawthorn put forth its sweet perfume, and the Dee murmured complacently by.

Oh, they were so happy! so united—so *one* in thought, in heart, and impulse!

Reclined on Kenneth's breast, Lily lay half embraced and half entranced, with her eyes fixed on the still waters of the flowing stream, and the thick green coppice, which cast a shadow on its surface. Suddenly her eyes dilated with terror; her breast heaved; a voiceless cry arose to her lips, and died there.

The brass muzzle of a carbine glittered among the thick alders opposite; and a fierce eye glared along the polished barrel. She had only time to utter a shriek, and throw herself as a shield before Kenneth, when a red flash broke from among the green leaves; the report rang with a hundred reverberations in

the copsewood glen, and the beautiful Lily Donaldson fell on the bosom of her lover, a corpse, with blood flowing in a torrent from her lips.

Who could paint the terror, the despair, of Kenneth?

With glaring eyes and outstretched arms, he stood for a moment like a statue of horror. His first impulse was to dash across the stream; to pierce the thicket, and reach the heart of her destroyer; his second to fling himself by her side, and endeavour to recall the life which had too surely fled for ever.

Entering her left shoulder, the ball intended for *his* heart had pierced that of Lily, and her pure spirit had departed to its Creator.

* * * *

From that hour poor Kenneth was a sad and silent mourner.

* * * *

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE RAID OF MACALLUM MHOR.

THE scarlet mantle and the blue bonnet of the murderer, with his crest thereon, were found in the thicket, and left no doubt as to who was the perpetrator of this terrible deed, which cast a gloom over all the fair north countrie. His carbine was also found; for, though full of deadly hate against his rival, Gordon had not the most remote intention of injuring Lily. The moment he saw the frightful result of his fury, he had thrown down his weapon in dismay, and fled like a madman to his Tower among the morasses. In one hour from that time he had come forth again, sheathed in full armour, and crossed the hills at the head of twenty mounted spearmen, journeying no one knew whither.

Kenneth buried his Lily in the old kirkyard of Logie-colstaine, on the grassy holme where, when the sun was in the west, the cross of St. Woloc's spire might fall upon her grave; for those charming old superstitions which cast a halo round the ancient faith, were yet lingering in the hearts of the Scottish people; and thus, though rigid Calvinists, they laid Lily with her feet to the east, and her fair head towards the setting sun, that, according to the tradition of the early Christians, she might, at the day of doom, see our Saviour when he comes from the east in his glory.

And there by her open grave, Kenneth Logie, with his head bare and his sword drawn, knelt down among the damp mould—that hideous earth, impregnated with the bones of other times; and on his blade and on his Bible made a sad, a stern, but solemn vow of vengeance, which he called on his Lily to hear, and their Maker to register in heaven. He was the last to leave her grave; and, long after all others had departed, the lonely youth—for he was but a youth—was seen to linger there.

Long, long and bitterly, he wept, even as a child weeps, and, embracing the newly laid turf, kissed it many times; and the sun had set before he tore himself away. But the thought of Halbert Gordon, and the reflection that already four days had elapsed, nerved him anew; and, with lingering steps and many a backward glance, he left the place where the Lily of the Forest lay.

It was now generally known that the Protestant lords were in arms against their Catholic fellow-subjects. Kenneth learned that Gordon had ridden towards the north, and knew that, if he was to be found within the kingdom of Scotland, it would be with his clansmen, the Gordons, beneath the banner of Lord Huntly.

On the night after the funeral, a single horseman well mounted, and armed after the fashion of a Lowland gentleman, with a close morion, corslet and arm-pieces, gorget and steel gloves, with petronel, Glasgow axe, and two-handed sword, rode forth alone from the old Place and oak-woods of Culbleine. He crossed the Dee, and, leaving the glen, diverged upon the open moorlands, which were then covered with heath and furze, and watered by deep rivulets and swampy hollows; and, striking at once into the road which led towards the west, never halted until he reached a place where it dipped over a hill, and then he checked his horse and looked back.

Like a broad round silver shield, the summer moon was rising behind the oak-woods he had left, and its beams glinted brightly on the spire of the old ruined church, at the foot of which lay Lily's lonely grave. Its shadow was falling full upon the spot where he knew she was lying.

This was her first night in the tomb—in that old and desolate burying-ground, among the weedy graves, the mossy headstones, and remains of the mouldering dead.

It seemed to Kenneth that she must be very cold and very lonely there. The conviction was a bitter one, that she, so young, so beautiful, so golden-haired—who had yet so much of this world about her—should be lying there abandoned to decay, with no one beside her—among the ghastly dead, and not as usual in her bed, in the little tapestryed room which her own

dear hands had industriously decorated, and which Kenneth knew so well. The idea had something in it frightful and unnatural.

It seemed as if she must still be living! Kenneth could not realise her death. But there was an appalling recollection of a convulsed face, a mouth flowing with blood, a grave, a coffin, a shovelling of earth, a batting down of sods, a trampling of feet, and a sound of lamentation.

She was in her cold and sequestered grave for the first time, with the midnight dew descending upon the grass that covered her.

The pale trooper shuddered, and, turning his horse, galloped furiously down the opposite side of the hill, on his mission of vengeance.

* * * * *

At this time the hereditary commissary of the Isles under James VI., Archibald seventh Earl of Argyle, and nineteenth chief of his race, a youth only twenty years of age, with the royal standard displayed, and half authorised by the king, was levying war against the Catholics of Scotland; but principally against his own enemies, the Earls of Huntly and Errol, who were the heads of the Roman faction. As the old ballad says—

“Macallum Mhor came frae the west, with many a bow and brand,
To waste the Rinnes he thought it best, the Earl of Huntly’s land.”

Suddenly assembling 12,000 men, a force which included the hardy islesmen of Sir Lauchlan M’Lean, the M’Intoshes under their chief, the Grants of Urquhart under Gartenbeg, a lesser baron of the clan; the M’Gregors and M’Neils under Barra, and the whole tribe of Campbell, whose fighting force was never under 5000 claymores, together with all whom a thirst for plunder, or feudal malice against the clan Gordon, could induce to join him, Argyle marched through Badenoch in hostile array, with pipes sounding and banners displayed. Repulsed by the MacPhersons, a brave and military tribe who had thrown themselves into the strong fortress of Ruthven, he poured down between the dark pine-woods of Strathspey, in the territory of the Grants, and encamping at Drimnin, upon the beautiful banks of the Avon—the winding river—summoned the Forbeses, the Frazers, the Dunbars, and the M’Kenzies to his standard; but there one solitary horseman alone joined him—Kenneth Logie of Culbleine.

George Earl of Huntly, and Francis Earl of Errol, great constable of Scotland, and hereditary leader of the feudal cavalry, the two nobles on whom this warlike torrent had burst from the northern and western hills, were in no way dismayed; for though steady and unflinching Catholics (and as such suspected of having corresponded with the Spaniards, when their Armada was fitted out against our old hereditary enemies), they knew that James VI., far from being inimical to the Romish cause, was only constrained by popular clamour, and the Reformed clergy, to levy war against them. They knew well that in secret he was friendly to the faith for which his mother—the poor victim of accumulated treasons—perished; and that though he had sent Argyle, an impetuous and inexperienced youth, against them, he would by no means take the field in person. They also knew that the Grants of Gartenbeg, the Campbells of Lochnell, and other Catholic families, who followed the banner of Argyle, with whom they *reckoned blood*, could not feel warmly in his cause; and thus, never doubting that God would give the victory to the cross which they carried on their ensigns, those brave Lords of Huntly and of Errol took the field with confidence.

At the head of a hundred horsemen, sheathed in complete armour, and magnificently mounted, the very flower of his numerous vassalage, the chief of the Hays left his house of Errol, and attended by the heir of Bonnitoun, Crichton of Invernytie, and Innes of that Ilk, with all his clan, who bore with them the skull of their patron St. Marnan, marched to the castle of Strathbogie, the muster-place of the Gordons, in their pastoral district, the Garioch.

On the way he was joined by Halbert Gordon of the moated Tower, with his twenty horsemen.

To Strathbogie also came Allan M'Ildhui, chief of the clan Cameron, and, after this junction, Huntly, whose forces amounted to only 1500 men, marched towards the Calvinists, after each soldier had made his confession, received communion, and sworn a solemn oath on *the Holy Iron*, to conquer or to die.

Full of enthusiasm for battle, this little troop marched down by the Bogie, and, as they defiled past the castle of Huntly, it is related that his countess—the fair Henriette of Lennox—held up

her youngest son to see the martial array. Pleased with the flash of steel, the note of the trumpet, and patter of the kettle-drum, he clapped his little hands and cried—

“Lord Daddy shall conquer and beat the Campbells!”

This was considered an omen of victory.

Crossing the dun mountains of the Garioch, they halted at Auchindoune, on the same day that the overwhelming force of Argyle encamped at Drimnin.

Passionate indeed was the eagerness, and fierce the joy, with which young Kenneth Logie heard that the troops of Lord Huntly were in the neighbourhood of the camp, and would soon be in view.

Young, brave, and enthusiastic, the valiant Argyle, the boy warrior—unlike the traitors who succeeded him, and in after years betrayed their country, and their king—sent forward a few horsemen under the Earl of Athole, and with these went Kenneth Logie; for, being a gentleman volunteer, without vassalage or attendants, his post was among the cavalry, and wherever there was most danger.

The evening of Wednesday, the 2nd October, had closed on the vast purple mountains and woods of sombre pine and silver birch that look down on the glens of the Livat and Fiddich, when these reconnoitring troopers, with their armour glittering in the starlight of the dying gloaming, rode softly and silently in extended order, with swords drawn and matches lighted, towards that part of the hills where they expected to see the forces of Huntly appear.

A line of red fires, dotting the dark brow of a distant hill, marked the bivouac of the Catholics. The smallness of its extent indicated their numerical inferiority, and the hearts of the Calvinists swelled with joy. At that moment a shot was heard; a horseman fell, and before Lord Athole's trumpeter could sound a rally, Captain—afterwards Sir Thomas—Kerr, with a troop of Huntly's cuirassiers, were upon them, shouting the *Cathghairm* of their leader—

“A Gordon! a Gordon! down with the heretics!—God and St. Mary for Scotland!”

A confused discharge of carbines and pistolettes took place;

a few horsemen fell on each side; then a short but furious encounter ensued with the sword, till, overborne by the number of Captain Kerr's men, those of Athole gave way, and retired towards the camp of Argyle.

Kenneth Logie was a man of *one* thought: that thought was vengeance! In this were merged and lost his Protestant sympathies and every other sentiment; but it was not without a sensation of shame that he found himself retiring before the victorious Catholics. Again and again he brandished his sword, and called on his comrades to "stand, and face about for Scotland and her Kirk!" but on they spurred in headlong panic, while shot after shot followed them, and many fell to rise no more from among the thick broom and brushwood, or the deep moss-haggs, over which they were galloping in the dark.

"A Gordon! a Gordon!" cried a voice behind Kenneth. He turned, for that voice smote his ear like the shot of a pistol, and in another moment he found himself engaged hand to hand with Halbert of the Tower—the destroyer of Lily, fair Lily of Culbleine. A savage ardour filled his heart; he felt a blindness coming over him in his passionate longing to avenge her.

"Do Thou nerve my hand!" he exclaimed, looking upward to heaven; "do Thou nerve it, and temper my sword, that the blood of the slayer may be shed!"

By this time his retreating comrades had left him far behind.

"Hold all your weapons, gentlemen," exclaimed Kenneth, as the foemen closed around him; "hold back, I charge you on your honours—it is a single combat;" and he pressed on Gordon, who, being a first-rate swordsman, parried every cut and thrust admirably, for Jock of the Cleugh had spared no pains on his military education. The traitor, however, cared not to encounter Kenneth alone if he could avoid him, and exclaimed—

"A Hay! a Gordon!—Slay, slay!—A thousand merks for his head; 'tis the great Macallum Mhor himself!—Slay—slay!"

On hearing this announcement, a hundred swords were levelled at Kenneth, who was thus compelled to turn his horse and escape, with more than one severe wound, while the shot of many a carbine and pistol followed him, as with a scornful and indignant heart he galloped towards the camp of the King of the West.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BATTLE OF GLENLIVAT—CONCLUSION OF THE COUNT'S STORY.

THE result of this skirmish was deemed a sure prognostic of victory by the Catholic band, and so far encouraged the Lord Huntly, that, after knighting Captain Kerr on the field, he resolved to attack Argyle before that noble could be joined by his ally, John Lord Forbes, who, with a considerable force, was hovering on the Lowland frontier. At this very time Argyle was already on the march, and his 12,000 followers had poured through Glenlivat, whose mountains gave back with countless reverberations the wild notes of the Highland pipe, the Almayne fife, and Lowland drum, until he reached the rugged banks of a small brook named by the Celts of the district *Aliconlachan*, when he could not conceal his astonishment on beholding Huntly's little band of only 1500 men, advancing resolutely through the lower grounds to attack him. These were chiefly horsemen, well armed on all points; their lances and helmets shone in the rising sun, and above their squadrons two great banners floated.

On the right was the *azure* standard of Huntly, charged with the three boars'-heads of Gordon; on the left waved a pennon *argent*, with the three escutcheons *gules*, the cognisance of the Hays, gained at Luncarty under Kenneth III. In the full blaze of light, poured over the dun mountains by the sun of a clear October morning, they were advancing, with horses neighing, kettle-drums beating, and all their burnished iron gleaming. Argyle became apprehensive that his numerical superiority in infantry might not avail him against so brilliant a band of mounted lairds and gentlemen.

The scene of these operations was a wild and pastoral glen; here and there a few tall Scottish firs reared their solemn outlines against the cloudless sky, with their dark and prickly foliage, and red trunks glittering in dew, as the sun shone on them.

Halting by the margin of the brook, Argyle held a council of war, to deliberate whether he should at once attack the Catholics, or keep upon the mountains, which were inaccessible to Huntly's horse, and remain there until Lord Forbes came up with his Lowland cavalry. John Stuart, Earl of Athole, a brave and upright peer, a privy councillor of James VI., and a lineal descendant of the high steward of Scotland, now said—

"I would advise your lordships to wait the arrival of his Majesty, who hath promised to join us with a large force; or at all events to tarry until we are joined by the Frazers and M'Kenzies from the north, and my Lord Forbes with the Forbeses, the Irvines, the Leslies, and other horsemen from the Lowlands. We shall then be certain of an almost bloodless victory."

This opinion, which was considered the most wise and judicious by the more experienced chiefs of Argyle's army, was overborne by the impetuosity of the young earl himself, and by old John Grant of Gartenbeg, a fierce and treacherous baron, who led a thousand Grants from Urquhart and the baronies of Corrimonie and Glenmorriston; and who, in a furious and ferocious speech, urged an immediate attack. The aspect of this venerable chieftain, in his shirt of mail and scarlet tartan, with long white hair flowing under his cap of steel, which had no other ornament than an eagle's feather and bunch of brambles, together with that energetic harangue which he delivered, with sword unsheathed and shield uplifted, bore all before it, and Argyle prepared to engage, by disposing his army in order of battle in two parallel columns, on the acclivity of a hill between Glenlivat and Glenrinnies.

The right wing was composed of the M'Intoshes and M'Leans, under M'Intosh and Sir Lauchlan M'Lean of Duairt.

The left was formed by the Grants, M'Neils, and M'Gregors, under Grant of Gartenbeg, near whom rode Kenneth Logie as an *aid*, or esquire. He contemplated the coming strife with gloomy joy, for his dreams of death and revenge were about to be fulfilled.

"My heart is empty now," thought he; "and the sooner it is cold the better." He had no desire to live, and, after seeking and slaying Gordon, had resolved to perish on the battle-field. The centre and vanguard was composed of 4000 Campbells, under Argyle's kinsman, the Laird of Auchinbreck. They carried

the earl's banner, and his badges as Great Master of the Household and High Justiciar of the kingdom. Half of these Campbells carried arquebusses; the remainder carried bows, targets, and two-handed claymores.

Argyle in person led the reserve, which consisted of 5000 warriors of the Ebudæ and western tribes of Lorn, all clad in their native tartans, with targets of burnished brass, battle-axes of steel, and short Highland bows. More than a hundred war-pipes were pouring the wild *piobrachds* of the various clans from flank to flank, as Huntly's little band approached them.

His vanguard consisted of 300 gentlemen on horseback, clad in bright armour, led by the Earl of Errol, Sir Patrick Gordon of Auchindoune, the Lairds of Gicht and Bonnitoun, Sir Thomas Kerr, and Halbert Gordon of the Moated Tower. In front of this small column were three fieldpieces under Sir Andrew Gray, afterwards colonel of the Scottish troops in Bohemia.

Gordon of Cluny led the right wing, Gordon of Abergeldie the left, and Huntly the main body. He had no reserve. In full armour, with a scarf of the Gordon tartan over his cuirass, with his visor up and his sword brandished, he rode along the line.

"My brave clansmen," he exclaimed, "and you, my comrades and most illustrious allies of the house of Errol, remember that this day no alternative is left us but victory or death—glory or extermination! We are not here to fight for our lives only, but for the existence of our families, our estates, our honour, and what is dearer than all beside, the church of our forefathers, and, with that church, the souls of our children, and the souls of all their posterity. In the name of God and the blessed Virgin, charge! *a Gordon! a Gordon!*"

Led on by the Lord High Constable (though galled by an ill-directed fire from the arquebussiers of Argyle), Huntly's vanguard of knights rushed with uplifted swords upon the first column of the Calvinists, who received them on their targets, and a furious combat took place. These gentlemen were in full armour, while the poor clansmen were only in their homespun tartan, and thus fought at great disadvantage; but their tremendous claymores cut through many a head and helmet, while every thrust pierced a coat-of-mail, or sliced away a yard of

good horseflesh; thus many a steed recoiled frantically on the main body, bleeding and riderless.

Over the heads of these combatants, the cannoniers of Sir Andrew Gray fired briskly on the *yellow* standard, according to a treacherous arrangement made secretly between Huntly and Campbell of Lochnell, who bore a mortal enmity to Argyle, for having slain his brother Campbell of Calder in 1592; and, being next heir to the earldom, he saw with ambitious hope and joy the ordnance fire on that peculiar banner which marked the post of his chief; but, lo! a misdirected shot raked the ranks of Lochnell himself, and that deep-witted duinewassal was the first whom it cut in two. The next ball killed M'Neil of Barra, and the third wounded John Grant of Corriemonie.

From the brow of a steep eminence, the M'Leans poured volley after volley with their arquebusses on Huntly's desperate troop, until Sir Patrick Gordon of Auchindoune dashed up, and fell amongst them with a few horsemen; but then the M'Leans slung their fire-arms behind them, and repelled the troopers by the claymore, embowelling the horses by dirk and skene-dhu, and slaying the riders as they were tumbled prone to the earth; and there died the brave Auchindoune, pierced by fifty wounds. His knights fought blindly in a dark cloud; for the smoke of the cannon and arquebusses filled the whole glen, while their reports rang among the mountain peaks with a thousand echoes.

In dark green tartans, bare-legged and bare-armed, with their targets slung behind them, and their claymores swayed by both hands, the Campbells poured down in thousands like a torrent upon the devoted band of Huntly, whose daring horsemen broke into two bodies, one led by himself, the other by the high constable, who was severely wounded, and desperately they fought, with all the fury that Highland valour, feudal hatred, and religious rancour could inspire; and thus for two hours the battle raged in that narrow glen, till Argyle, observing that his main body wavered, ordered John Grant of Gartenbeg, with his column, consisting of a thousand men of his own name, to "advance and sweep the Catholics from the field."

Clad in scarlet tartan, with helmets and cuirasses of steel, and targets of burnished brass, this body, which had not been engaged

otherwise than suffering from the cannonade, was advancing to end the contest, when their leader, who in secret was an ally of Huntly, and a well-wisher to the Catholic cause, threw his target over his shoulder, sheathed his claymore, and cried—

“To the mountains! to the mountains!” on which the Grants, with the whole left wing, gave way, and retired *en masse* towards the hills. Thus Kenneth Logie, who had long curbed his impatience, found himself alone, and in one moment more was involved among the advancing tide of Huntly’s desperate horsemen, who, fighting every foot of the way, with the earl’s torn banner fluttering above them, were hewing a passage over a field strewed with clansmen, whose tartans were drenched in blood. Nothing could surpass the bravery on both sides; one fighting for glory—the other for their lives, honour, and religion.

In the heat of the conflict, Lord Huntly had his horse shot under him, and Halbert Gordon, who, with all his faults, was brave as a lion, quickly slew Campbell of Auchinbreck, and remounted the earl on that gentleman’s steed. At that moment, Kenneth Logie, who, with the coolness of a spectator, had been watching the conflict, reserving his strength and his wrath for Gordon, uttered a wild yell of rage and grief, and rushed upon him. They both wore open helmets, and, recognising each other, encountered at once, bridle to bridle, and hand to hand, with a savage and sombre fury, which rendered them quite oblivious of the battle that raged like a storm around them. They had not a breath for insult or invective; their teeth were set; their eyes were full of fire; they both hovered on the brink of eternity, and each saw nothing but his enemy.

“For *her* sake, blessed Lord, direct my hand!” prayed Kenneth, and it seemed as if that voiceless prayer had been heard; for at the very moment his sword passed through the breast of Gordon, who fell forward across the saddle of his victor.

“Dog!” exclaimed the latter, seizing him relentlessly by the throat; “dog, and son of a dog, dost thou repent her death?”

“I do,” gasped Gordon, almost choked in his blood; “sorely I do; but that fatal bullet was for thee—for thee—and not for her!”

“Would to Heaven thine aim had been more true! Lily,” cried Kenneth, looking upward, “I have avenged thee.”

“And thus I avenge myself!” exclaimed Gordon, as, with the last energy apparently of life, he twice buried his dagger in the body of Kenneth, and they fell together from their horses on the slippery field.

Gordon was supposed to be dead—but evil spirits do not pass so readily from among us.

Kenneth was borne away by a few of the Campbells; but he seemed to be in a dying state.

By this time Argyle, notwithstanding the vast superiority of his forces, had lost the battle, and Huntly was victorious. Disheartened by the treachery of the Grants and Lochnell, the Calvinists gave way in every direction; and though the brave McLeans did all that mortal men could do to retrieve the falling fortune of the day, Huntly’s horsemen drove them pell-mell beyond the rugged brook of Altconlachan, from whence the clansmen retreated to those steep mountains, up which mailed troopers could never pursue them. There, in the obscurity of the night, far down below in Glenlivat, they heard the trumpets sounding, as they summoned the Hays and the Gordons around their leaders, and all dismounted to kneel on that bloody field, where they solemnly sang *Te Deum Laudamus*.

Argyle left his two cousins Lochnell and Auchinbreck, the Laird of Barra, and five hundred men, dead in the valley; while Huntly lost only the Knight of Auchindoune, the Laird of Gicht, and a score or two of troopers.

Such was the Highland battle of Balrinnes or Glenlivat, which struck terror into the Scottish Protestants, and where Argyle lost his famous yellow banner, which was borne with other trophies into the Garioch, and placed on the summit of Huntly’s castle of Strathbogie.

Abandoned by the Campbells in their hurried retreat, and left almost dying among the mountains that overlook the Livat, Kenneth found shelter in the hut of a poor old Highland crone, whose medical treatment, however kindly meant, aggravated the deadly nature of his wounds; and, as he had no wish to live, two months after the battle he sought his native place, but to die; and, however like romance the last episode of this story may be, I must only rehearse the event as it was narrated to me.

John Shool, the sexton of Logie Kirk, on entering the old burial-ground one cold and bitter morning in December, for the purpose of digging a grave, found a horse, with the bridle trailing between its legs, cropping the grass among the mounds and tombs; and he was still more startled—if any thing can startle one whose occupation is so horrible—on finding an armed man lying on the flat stone which covers fair Lily's grave. His rigid arms were spread over it, and his cold cheek rested on the letters of her name. The old carle turned him over, and uttered a cry of astonishment and pity on recognising Kenneth Logie of the Forest!

John averred, that when first found his lips were pressed upon the frost-covered gravestone. Some persons thought that this might be the sexton's fancy, or the position was accidental.

He looked calm and placid, and, as the winter sunshine fell upon his blanched face, and the morning wind lifted the dark locks of his dewy hair, it seemed to the old gravedigger as if poor Kenneth smiled.

He was buried there, and the stone which bears the inscription (already given), with the sword and cross, marks the place where he lies; the defaced tomb beside it covers the grave of Lily Donaldson.*

The flowers of many a summer have strewed their leaves above these graves; but at this hour the memory of those lovers is as fresh in Cromar as if they had been buried only yesterday.

Gordon did not die; but, leaving Scotland for ever, entered, as a Catholic, the service of the Emperor, and assuming his mother's name and designation, as Halbert Cunningham of the Boortree-haugh, soon rose to honour and distinction. After the fashion of some of the Scoto-Imperialists, he spelt his name in a foreign manner, and as “Albrecht Count of Kœningheim” it will be frequently found in the pages of the *Swedish Intelligencer*, and the works of Famiano Strada, the Jesuit.

* A large cairn marked, or still marks, the place where Lily fell by the hand of Halbert Gordon. The stronghold of his family was pulled down many years ago, and the materials were used in the erection of other edifices; the deep wide *Moat* is still traceable on the farm called Parks-of-Coldstone. It surrounds an area of an acre; but the morass has long since been drained.

Book the Eleventh.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WALLENSTEIN.

SUCH was the story revealed to us by the little manuscript book of Koenigheim, who, wandering from his native land, had sought death among the armies of the Empire, but found honour, rank, wealth, and distinction heaped upon him; for, until now, in every field he had escaped unharmed, and seemed to bear a charmed life, for against his breast the bullet had failed, and the steel lost its point.

Ernestine and I kept the secret between ourselves, and to her care I consigned the little manuscript book, which we resolved to preserve as a relic or souvenir of a brave but unfortunate friend. He was buried with all the military honours of his rank.

King Christian ordered the royal standard to be half hoisted on the *Anna Catharina*, the yards to be topped up in various directions, and the rigging to be thrown into loops and bights; and, under a salute of cannon, the body was lowered into a boat, and slowly pulled ashore. It was the evening of a beautiful and sunny day, but I do not remember to have seen a scene more solemn. The brave and venerable King of Denmark stood bareheaded on the deck, and his single eye glistened with self-gratification at the last honours he was thus enabled to render the bravest of his enemies—one whose valour had mainly contributed to the defeat of the Danes at Lütter.

All the officers of the little fleet and army attended the interment, and three companies of our regiment (M'Alpine's, Kildon's, and my own) formed the firing party. The muffled drum

rolled; the shrill fife and the solemn war-pipe poured their saddest wail; and after a prayer from the Rev. Gideon Geddes, our preacher, we lowered him into Danish ground, by the shore of the Baltic sea, whose tideless waves were chafing and rippling on the yellow sand, within a pike-length of his dark and solitary grave.

Close by, a choir of birds sang joyously among a group of green birches and copper beeches; the sun of one of the loveliest days of summer was setting at the far and flat horizon, and between the thickets it poured upon the open grave a flood of that warm light which was dying away on the blue waters of the sea. Three hundred bright musket-barrels flashed thrice in the sun, as they were raised with muzzles skyward for the parting volley.

Then the drums rolled, while the pioneers heaped the sandy earth above him, and all was over.

It was an open and somewhat desert spot; near were three earthen tumuli, where perhaps the warriors of some remote and unknown battle lay. These rose to the height of twenty feet above the wavelike ridges of the coast; and between them lay a small morass, with the roots and trunks of vast pines imbedded in the moss—the remnants of some mighty forest, that of old had shrouded the unhallowed rites to the spirit of Loda.

There was no stone to speak to other years—as our mountain songs have it—to tell his fame to other times; and thus the nameless grave of the poor Scottish wanderer was left in its solitude by the sandy shore of the Baltic sea.

There is ever something solemn, touching, and mysterious about a grave that is solitary; it seems loneliness made more lonely, especially if it is the last resting-place of a stranger—an unknown or a nameless person. Thus it is more than probable, that in time the honest Holsteiners may have framed some dark legend concerning the Scotsman's grave, for oral transmission to the children of their children. But now to resume my own narrative.

Finding that the redoubt or sconce erected on the coast was of considerable strength, and by its elevation a garrison would be able to defend it on the landward, and keep all the adjacent country in check, while from the seaward they could be supplied with every provision,—after some skirmishing with the Im-

perialists from Kiel, and having one smart encounter, wherein Ian, with two companies of our regiment, handled Wingarti's dragoons (who endeavoured to turn our flank) in such a manner, that to their dying hour they would never forget the Scottish invincibles—King Christian drew all off on board of his ships, except some of old Colonel Dübbelsteirn's Dutch companies, who were left to defend the place; and who—if ultimately taken—would be no great loss.

We then put to sea.

This measure was rendered imperative by certain tidings which, about this time, old Baron Fœyœ brought from the sequestered court of Anna Catharina, concerning the siege of the free, and hitherto peaceful, city of Stralsund.

Wallenstein the Duke of Friedland, as generalissimo of the Emperor by sea and land, had resolved to sweep the shores as well as the waters of the Baltic. By shipping from Dantzig and the Hanse towns, he had carried the war to the other side of that shallow ocean, and pursued the Danes into the heart of their own isles. In the prosecution of his daring and ambitious plans of conquest, he hoped to cut off all communication between the states of Lower Germany and the Scandinavian kings; and by the aid of Poland—which was already dependent on Vienna—he hoped to stretch the authority of Ferdinand II. from the Sound of Elsineur to the shores of the Adriatic.]

Such was the *avowed* intention of this great general; but in his inner heart he nursed one greater and more daring scheme, which was nothing less than to acquire territory and found a power, that, together with the army, which by his bravery, tact, and lavish generosity adored him, he might be enabled to throw off the yoke of that empire he was pretending to extend, and thus found a regal dynasty of his own.

In pursuance of this gigantic view he resolved to seize Stralsund, a city of the Baltic—the sixth of the Hanseatic League. It had remained peaceful during this disastrous war, pursuing those habits of industry which had secured it so many privileges from the Dukes of Pomerania; but its noble harbour, and vicinity to the coasts of Sweden and Denmark, made its possession necessary to the conqueror. He sent Campmaster-

general Arnheim to the burghers, requiring them to receive an Imperial garrison; but they wisely refused, and betook them to their muskets and morions, buff-coats and halberts. He then sent Colonel Goëtz, who merely requested permission to march the enormous and disorderly army of Austria *through* the city; but the burgomaster was too wary, and this also was refused. Then the gates were closed and cannon loaded; the city stood upon its defence, and Wallenstein besieged it with a fury, the greater because it lay so near his newly acquired dukedom of Mechlenburg, and barred his way to mightier conquests. He poured his brigades through Pomerania, made the Duke Bogislaus IV. a prisoner; and after receiving £25,000 from the Stralsunders, as a bribe to leave them unmolested, coolly put the money into his treasury, and then attacked the city with the greatest determination, investing it on all sides; but left Arnheim and the Count of Carlstein to press the siege, while he went to scourge the citizens of Gustrow, the capital of Mechlenburg, a duchy which had just been bestowed upon him by Ferdinand.

Such were the tidings brought to the king by the Baron Fœyœ, as we lay under easy sail in the Fehmer-sund, about the end of summer, and he was thunderstruck by the intelligence; for if Stralsund fell, the free navigation of the Baltic would be for ever lost, alike to Sweden and to Denmark.

Without an hour's delay, he despatched the Baron Karl on an embassy to the great Gustavus Adolphus, begging that they might now forget their petty jealousies, and unite to save the Stralsunders. Karl made good speed with his mission, and the famous treaty of 1628, concluded soon after, was its result. The northern kings bound themselves to combine for the defence of the city, and to oppose every hostile power in the Baltic. Gustavus offered to send Sir Alexander Leslie of Balgonie with five thousand Scottish troops, while Christian was to furnish a squadron of ships; and this squadron that gallant prince resolved to lead in person.

Elsineur was to be the muster-place, and all the remains of our slender garrisons in Zealand, Laaland, and Falster, and every man who could handle a musket in the king's service, was ordered to repair there by an appointed day.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MAJOR OF MUSKETEERS.

THE whole of our regiment looked forward with joy and ardour to entering on this new arena of operations, where we hoped to do deeds more worthy of us than the futile and desultory conflicts maintained by the brave, but almost fugitive King Christian, along the shores of the Lesser Belt ; and though at times I caught the old spirit, from the fire, animation, and example of my comrades, the presence of Ernestine, and the doubt which overhung the fate of Gabrielle, were to me a source of great anxiety.

Christian having heard that the Count of Carlstein was with the Imperialists at the siege of Stralsund, was so gracious as to offer Ernestine the use of a small vessel with a white flag, that she might, accompanied by a slender retinue, rejoin him ; but she modestly declined, and requested permission to remain until she could obtain some certain tidings of her sister ; and the king pledged himself, that between this day and that of the rendezvous at Elsineur, nothing should be left undone to discover in what direction Count Merodé had marched.

Ernestine's proud heart was filled with gratitude, and on her knees she wept and kissed the rough brown hand of the warrior king, who immediately raised her up.

In the cabin of Sir Nikelas Valdemar she stood, amid a group of some twenty noble ladies of Holstein, all fugitives, and bound for Zealand ; but in her satin hood of that bright yellow, which so finely became her beautiful black hair, and with her dark, yet timid and dovelike eyes, my Ernestine was the fairest among that group of fair ones.

By the isles of Fuhnen and Zealand we were to march for Elsineur, while the king was to go round with the fleet by sea,

and take on board some of the little garrisons he had left in Faasinge, Ærœ, and the lesser isles. The ladies on board the *Anna Catharina*, being anxious to reach the cathedral city of Roschilde or Copenhagen, landed with us at Faaborg, from whence they proceeded at once towards their various destinations; some in caleches, others by waggon, the usual vehicle of the country, for transmission from place to place.

The Baron Karl had kindly placed his gilded caleche with its two sturdy switch-tailed Holsteiners at the service of Ernestine, so long as she might require them, and, having no other means of protection, she resolved with her female attendants to travel with our column towards Elsineur. The circumstance of her being with us, thrown in a manner so isolated, completely under my wardship (a beautiful young girl under the charge of a young fellow of three-and-twenty—and that young fellow an officer), certainly made me think, that, if we were married, a great deal of trouble in the mode of travelling, and expense in the matter of billets, might be saved; but her unprotected state, the distance from her father, and the mystery that overhung her sister's fate, compelled me to keep such occasional thoughts to myself.

Ernestine placed perfect confidence in every soldier of our regiment, and there were not less than a hundred tall gillies in my own company, each of whom considered it their bounden duty to risk life and limb, if necessary, in defence of the foreign lady who was the kinswoman of their captain, and consequently the kinswoman of every one who bore the name of Rollo or M'Farquhar.

On the morning we landed at Faaborg, a beautiful and unclouded sun arose from a brilliant sea, and its morning light tipped the foamy waves with purple; even in storms, the waves of that shallow sea are never so great as those of the outer ocean; but by their fury and rapidity they are much more dangerous, as they roll through the narrow straits, to deposit amber on the sands of Courland and on the Prussian shore.

At the small and unsheltered port of Faaborg, the Danish boats landed us on the ruinous quay; the little that had survived the time when the soldiers of Christian III. burned the town was ill built and fast decaying. Being situated at the end of

shallow bay, and among marshes, Ian resolved that we should at once march inland, lest the effect of a swampy district on our mountaineers in the summer season, might cause some fatal disorder. As the king had directed him to halt for four days, that we might recover from the close confinement of the ships, he marched for Hesinge, a small town which we entered about mid-day, with our drums beating and pipes playing, to the great consternation and manifest annoyance of the townsmen and boors; who, although too cowardly to fight their own battles, gave ever a poor welcome to those who were good-natured enough to do that favour for them.

During this ten miles' march, I had frequently walked by the door of Ernestine's caleche; she was becoming intensely dejected; for to lose sight of the Baltic seemed like relinquishing all hope of recovering Gabrielle.

As the regiment drew up in close column under the colours in the main street of the little town, where all their bright arms flashed in the sun, as they were *ordered* on the ground, with the clatter of seven hundred butts of steel, a well-dressed cavalier, who wore a suit of peach-coloured velvet, laced with silver, large calf-skin boots, a broad hat bound with galloon, and garnished by a red feather, with a sword and pair of pistols in his girdle, rose up from a table under a beech that stood before the door of the Inn, which was named the Green-Tree.

While his horse which stood near took corn from a wooden bowl, he had been regaling himself with a pipe of tobacco and a can of pale Odensee beer, when the rat-tat of our drums and the flashing of our arms, as we marched in, had excited his attention. He came slowly towards us. I saw him look once or twice into the caleche which followed the baggage wains, and then, as became a well-bred cavalier, he touched his beaver to its fair occupant. His figure now seemed familiar to me.

"Welcome to Hesinge, Captain Rollo," said he, grasping my hand, with a broad laugh.

"Major Fritz!" I exclaimed; "I thought you were at Vienna."

"Henckers! I *was* there, long enough, paying the penalty of admiring a pair of pretty ankles in white stockings."

"Oh—the mask?"

"No more of that—for I cannot, with patience, think of the outrageous ass I made of myself. However, I escaped; reached Rostock, disguised as a valet of General Arnheim, and wearing a suit of his livery, which I purchased at Vienna, took shipping at the Baltic, reached Nyeborg last week, and was on my way to join the king, when I now learn that his majesty is sailing round by the Great Belt for Helsingör. I am most anxious to serve again."

"Christian will gladly receive you."

"'Pon my soul, I would be most happy to take charge of your baggage guard."

"Thank you, major—but Willie Lumsden, my own lieutenant, has that duty assigned him."

"I think it would be a very interesting service, notwithstanding the dust, the noise, and the screeching of the wheels at one's ear. Ay, faith!" he continued, looking back, "'tis a dainty dame."

"Who—Herr Major?"

"She, with the dark hair and yellow hood in yonder caleche. Those arms are very like Klosterfiord's. Surely Karl has not been such a blockhead as to marry the daughter of old Rantzau—Gunhilda, the holiday nun—the prudish little sister of St. Knud?"

"Our pistolier is still in the full enjoyment of single blessedness."

"Then whose ware may she be?"

I did not make any answer.

"Your colonel's lady," continued this incorrigible fellow; "for I do not perceive any other caleche. What! you grow red as a turkeycock! Zounds—it cannot be—is she thine? my dear fellow, I congratulate you. Happy dog! I should like to be in your shoes for six hours. Is she Carlstein's daughter? Faith! she turned the heads of half the Viennese."

I had some trouble in preserving my countenance and my temper, while Fritz ran on in this fashion. He quickly perceived this.

"Come," said he; "taste the beer of Odensee. I drink to you, Herr Captain. You are a most fortunate dog; but upon my soul I would not like to have a wife half so pretty."

"Why so, Fritz?" said I, rather amused by his rattling manner.

“Because a girl like Lady Ernestine will never want for lovers. They will swarm about her, like flies round a honey-pot.”

“But I have the strongest faith in her.”

“Faith! oh, that is an excellent and most necessary quality for one who has ideas of matrimony.”

“Come, Herr Fritz—now, do not be impertinent.”

“I—impertinent—not for the world.”

“*Your* faith was strong in a pretty mask of black velvet.”

“Enough, enough, my boy. I shall say no more,” said he, clinking his can against mine; “my faith was not strong; but I am not the first man who has been led out of his way by seeing a mincing step, a lifted skirt, and a pair of pretty ankles, encased in spotless white stockings. *Der Teufel!* no. By the by, do you mean to beat up the Imperialists in this neighbourhood?”

“Imperialists here—in Odenzee—on this side of the Belt?”

“They are in every region but the Infernal, I believe, which should be their proper quarter. Is it possible that you do not know that a regiment of German musketeers occupy the old castle on the Cape of Helnœsland, about six Danish miles from this?”

“No, and sure I am that M’Farquhar, our lieutenant-colonel, knows nothing of it either.”

“Tis nevertheless true, though. Count Merodé, with his regiment, have ensconced themselves there, and have been playing some pretty pranks among the wives and daughters of our boors for a week past.”

“Merodé!” I exclaimed, in a breathless voice, alike thunderstruck, and overjoyed by this intelligence. “Tell me, if there are any ladies with him.”

“How should I know, my comrade?” asked the major waggishly, as he filled the beer cans again. “Is *one*—is that pretty one in the caleche, not enough for you? But doubt not, that wherever the Merodeurs are, a large assortment of the weaker vessels are always to be found.”

“Ah, Heavens! Ernestine, be joyful! Think of what I have just heard!” said I, rushing from the major to the door of the caleche, where Ian had dismounted and was conversing with

her ; “ our dear Gabrielle is in yonder castle on the promontory—not two cannon-shots distant.”

“ What the devil is all this about ? ” said Fritz, with a perplexed air, as he switched his capacious boots ; “ ‘pon my soul, ‘tis highly dramatic ! ”

The eyes of Ernestine were filled with tears.

“ Dioul ! are you sure of this ? ” said Ian, whose hand wandered about the hilt of his long claymore.

“ I am sure that at least Merodé is there.”

“ Enough then,” said Ian ; “ madam, if this Austrian robber does not surrender your sister to us in four-and-twenty hours —spotless and unharmed as when he seized her—by the soul of my father ! by the bones that lie under Cairn na Cuihmne ! and by the Holy Iron, I will give *his* head to the wolves, and his heart to the eagles ! ”

Honest Ian commenced in German, and gradually slid into his Gaëlic, consequently, Ernestine understood only the half of what he said ; but enough, however, to be assured, that he meant to rescue her sister at all hazards.”

“ May God bless you, kind cousin ! ” said she placing her hands on his shoulders, while her dove-like eyes, that beamed with affectionate admiration, were fixed on his dark and handsome face. “ If a brave heart and a strong hand can save her, Gabrielle is already saved ; and she could not owe her freedom to one she loves better than her cousin, Ian Dhu ! ”

“ Let Merodé look to himself,” continued Ian ; “ for it is not every day that he and his ruffianly caterans, have seven hundred Highlandmen to reckon their accounts with.”

Big Phadrig, who was standing near, with his enormous *tuagh*, or Lochaber axe, gave it a flourish, and ran to acquaint the regiment (which had now piled arms) of the pretty piece of work that was likely to be cut out for it ; while Ian assembled M’Alpine, M’Coll, Kildon, Major Fritz, and several other officers, under the *Green Tree*, where—assisted by several cans of Odenzee beer—a solemn council of war was held upon the occasion.

Our suppositions were correct ; for, as the sequel proved, poor Gabrielle was actually that moment Merodé’s prisoner in the old castle of Helnesland.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CASTLE OF HELNÆSLAND.

AFTER carelessly setting on fire the fortress of Fredicksort, Merodé had been ordered by Tilly to establish himself in the next suitable castle; and in search of this, after a desultory and—to the people—disastrous march along the shore of the Lesser Belt, he daringly crossed over to Fuhnen, an island so named in consequence of its beauty and fertility, and established himself in an old tower, on the sandy promontory of Helnæsland.

Grim and strong, but small, and blending with the rock on which it is built, the castle had formed part of the dowery of the fair Florentina, Princess of Denmark, who about 1380 was espoused by Sir Henry Sinclair of Roslin (in Lothian), whom the king her father created Duke of Oldenburg, and Lord of Zetland; and I believe that his coat-of-arms, with the cross engrailed, the ships within the tressure, and the motto of the Lairds of Roslin, *Commit thy work to God*, are yet to be seen above the porch of the old fortress, collared by the orders which he wore—the Thistle, the Golden Fleece, and St. Michael.

While all the incidents which have occupied the last few chapters were passing elsewhere, Gabrielle was a prisoner in Helnæsland, pining for her father, for her sister, and for freedom, exposed to the incessant persecution of Merodé, who, instead of proceeding to extremities, had grown wonderfully tractable, and actually went the length of offering his hand, as well as his amiable heart.

When not attended by the count, Prudentia was ever by her side, to sing his praises. In this affair the dancer acted, apparently, with great self-denial; but, in truth, she and Merodé had grown perfectly tired of each other; and she was only waiting an opportunity for quietly and conveniently marching off

with all the gold and jewels she could lay her pretty hands upon.

“Perverse one,” said Prudentia, on one occasion, kissing Gabrielle; “have I not said a thousand times, that this handsome and gallant noble will marry you with joy?”

“Why does he not marry *you*?” asked Gabrielle simply; “I am sure you are much prettier than I.”

“I am only a poor girl of Spain (*Ay de mi Espana!*)—you are the daughter of a great noble.”

“The count should remember that, and permit me to join my father——”

“Who is not himself free; rumour says he is marching to Stralsund; but truth adds, as I have said before, that he is imprisoned by the emperor at Vienna.”

“My poor father!”

“The Count of Merodé is at present heir-presumptive to the Duke of Pomerania!”

“But the duke may marry.”

“What! old Bogislaus IV?” asked Prudentia, with a merry burst of laughter.

“Yes—and have heirs.”

“Very likely,” replied Prudentia drily; “for heirs often come into noble families when they have no business to be there.”

So great was her terror of Merodé, that Gabrielle scarcely ever dared to undress; she slept by snatches, closing her eyes like a child lulled by weariness and weeping; and often started, thinking that she heard the voice of her sister, addressing her in the accents of affection and tenderness, or distress and despair; or imagining that she felt the hateful touch of the crime-blackened Merodé, or saw the handsome face, the grave, dark, honest eye of Ian Dhu. Frequently she thought herself again in the little dogger, rolling over the foam-crested waves of the Lesser Belt, and that friends were beside her. Then she would spring from the couch of the beautiful but guilty Spanish girl, to look forth on the dawning day, and the young alder-trees, that waved their green branches beneath the old grey tower of Helnœsland.

At last, one morning Prudentia disappeared, and all the

valuables of Merodé—his diamond order of Carinthia, his massive gold chain with his holy medals, his purse, &c.—vanished with her, and all the magnificent jewels he had placed at the disposal of Gabrielle, who was doubly shocked on discovering the character of the woman who had been her companion; and that she was Prudentia, the celebrated dancer, and the sister of the infamous Bandolo; for in the first burst of his anger, the count told every thing. The horror of Gabrielle increased. The remembered sweetness of the dancer's manner, seemed now all acting and professional study; her wit became levity, her charming candour, impudence.

Gabrielle felt more than ever the impossibility of trusting any of those around her, and her heart shrunk within itself. Dreading his own officers, none of whom were very scrupulous, Merodé kept her so secluded that now she saw no one, save an old German woman, the wife of a Fourrier de Campement, whose waggon for retailing beer and tobacco, or exchanging them for plunder, had followed the regiment from Vienna.

As one day will suffice for a specimen of the system pursued by the incorrigible Merodé, I will select that on which he last did Gabrielle the honour to place at her disposal his hand as well as his heart; for he was now beginning to reflect, that if she ever procured her freedom, without some such guarantee (for her silence) as matrimony, old Rupert-with-the-Red-plume, who certainly was, as he knew, then *en route* for Stralsund, at the head of a column of infantry, might take a terrible vengeance on the whole house of Merodé.

The room occupied by Gabrielle was low and gloomy; it had two windows arched and grated:—one faced the Lesser Belt, and the shore of Alsen, about ten miles distant; the other opened to the promontory on which the tower was situated, and overlooked its spacious garden. There, the parterres were bordered by deep edgings of old boxwood; the older hedges and alleys formed labyrinths, overtopped by the rustling leaves of the shady beeches. About their old stems, the purple bramble and the yellow honeysuckle grew in heavy and matted clusters, while long dark wreaths of spiral ivy clambered along their gnarled branches. Here and there, to terminate the vista of the long

shady walks, were placed several ancient stones, covered with hideous emblems, and those mysterious Runes, the invention of which is ascribed to Odin, ruler of the elements and king of spells.

Gabrielle seldom gazed into the garden, for some of Merode's officers were usually seated on the benches there, playing chess, smoking, drinking, or toying with some of the ladies who had occupied the waggons seen by Father Ignatius. Her sad eyes were constantly fixed on the blue waters of the Belt; there liberty and freedom seemed to be; the passing ships—the sky and ocean—with the seabirds floating like white specks amid the sparkling azure.

Though the season was summer, a large piece of turf (the only fuel in Fuhnen) burned in the fireplace of her chamber; for these old castles by the sea are ever damp and cold. This was supplied from time to time by fresh peats heaped on by the Fourrier's wife, with an enormous pair of iron tongs, from an oak bunker, built into a recess, which, like the fireplace, the doors, windows, and every other opening in the edifice, had a low-browed narrow arch, with deep zigzag mouldings, springing from little shafted pillars with escalloped capitals. Great squares of hideous and uncouth tapestry, wrought, as tradition says, by the Princess Florentina, covered the walls. The figures and the subject were enough to appal even a stouter heart than Gabrielle's.

They represented the last human sacrifice offered up in Britain. In the midst of a wood of gloomy pines stood a group of tall, ghostly, and long-bearded Druids, armed with their brass celts, and bearing goblets of mead. Amidst them stood Einhar, Earl or Jarl of Caithness, who, in a battle near Avon-Horsa, in the days when Gregory the Great was King of Scotland, had taken prisoner Haldona, Prince of Norway, and offered him up to Odin. On an altar of stone the prince lay bound, and in his throat was the knife of the arch-druid,* for even in Gregory's days, some priests of Paganrie still lingered in the northern isles.

These horrible, misshapen, and ghastly figures, were unpleasant objects for Gabrielle to contemplate; and she always turned from them to the engrailed cross, the heraldic ships, and motto of the Sinclairs, which the princess had hung upon the pines of

* A mound still marks where this occurred, A.D. 893.

the forest, committing an anachronism by no means uncommon in ancient tapestries.

Lost in thought, with her cheek resting on her right hand, Gabrielle had been gazing on the waters of the Belt, which mellowed with the shore in the sunny evening haze. Her pretty feet, cased in high-heeled shoes of scarlet velvet, richly embroidered with gold, rested on a satin footstool. Her right hand played with her fine hair, which hung in short loose ringlets, according to the fashion of the time.

A step, and the touch of a hand aroused her.

She turned to meet the impassioned eyes of Merodé, with his lanky black mustache, long ringleted hair, parted in the centre of his forehead, and his sinister face a little flushed by wine and recent merriment. She gave a slight shudder—a shrug of her shoulder, and said—

“ Oh—is it you again?”

“ And have you really an aversion for me, whom even my enemies admit to be the first in the breach, the foremost in the charge, and the last in retreat—though the Imperialists never *do* retreat. The heedlessness and imprudence of youth have plunged me into an abyss of misery and error; but my pride still bears me up, Gabrielle—yea, above even your scorn.”

She did not reply.

“ Ah!” said he in a low voice, “ if I could only be her friend, it would not be a bad preface to the part of lover.”

“ Friend—oh, never!” replied Gabrielle, who had overheard these words: “ Merodé can never be the friend of a virtuous woman.”

Merodé seemed to be stung by her words; but he laughed, while her eyes filled with tears.

“ Upon my soul, girl, you will weary me by this incessant resistance. You are just like Clelia or Cleopatra, who did not give their lovers so much as the smallest kiss, sometimes for six years.”

“ Dear Ernestine—if you knew all I suffer here!” said Gabrielle, bursting as usual into a passionate fit of weeping.

“ Oh, do not talk of Ernestine!” said Merodé, rather coarsely, for the wine he had just imbibed was loosening his tongue, while

it clouded his faculties. “I do not see why you should have such a horror of following *my* regiment in a gilded caleche drawn by six white horses, when she follows the bare legs of the Scottish musketeers in a caleche drawn by two brown Holsteiners.”

“Wretch—silence!” said Gabrielle, crossing to the opposite window, and seating herself.

“Wretch—silence? here is a specimen of such good manners as we learn in Vienna!” said Merodé, following and leaning on the back of her chair. He continued to say a hundred fine things, with which the fluency of the time, his own ready invention, and impulsive nature supplied him. For more than an hour he continued to talk thus; and for that hour Gabrielle did nothing but weep and sob—sob and weep—without replying, till her eyes became inflamed, her face pale, her head ached, and her heart grew sick.

“Ah! tell me, my pretty Gabrielle, why am I so repugnant to you? ‘Pon my honour, one would almost imagine I was a veritable ogre! Now, for the last time, I conjure you to tell me, if I have any hopes of living, or if I must blow out my brains? Speak—this silence—this grief—this apathy, overwhelm me with sorrow. Ah, what an unhappy rascal I am!”

Still there was no reply given.

Merodé had been so accustomed by presents, by flattery, and feigned affection, to overcome every obstacle thrown in his way by the many dark, brown, and fair beauties whom he had subdued, that he was piqued, perplexed, and even amused by the difficulty and resistance he encountered in Gabrielle. This gave her a new and dangerous charm; and, after his own fashion, he was now beginning to love her, at the very time when—had he been successful—that love would have been dying away; so he continued to string together assertions of his love and admiration, in the style of camp and barrack love-making, most familiar to him.

“You are so enchanting, Gabrielle! you are just the height I admire, and you must remember how I adored you at Vienna. Though when taken in detail, perhaps, your face is not of that kind which sculptors—the blockheads!—term strictly handsome, when taken altogether, it is divine! Your eyes are lively, full

of tenderness and fire ; your lips are full of smiles—(certainly not just now, by the Henckers !) but red as a rosebud ; and your ankles—'pon my soul, they *are* very fine !”

Here Gabrielle retreated to the other window, and turned her back, but he followed her ; then she began to tremble with anger.

“I do not mean to insult you—I do not mean to be rude ! I have the tongue of an ass,” said Merodé, beginning to speak very thick. “What is all this about ? Now, if I was not a young fellow of spirit—ah pardon me, poor little Tot!—or is it a romance we are acting ? I never meant to marry, but hang me as high as Mordecai, if I will not marry you, Gabrielle, ay, marry you in sober earnest—rather than not have you.”

“Insult upon insult !” she murmured.

“Come, come, Gabrielle,” said he, approaching a step ; “listen to what I say, for assuredly your friends have forgotten you.”

“It almost seems so,” she replied, drowned in tears ; “but even it were so, God will not forget me.”

“Neither He nor they can protect you, while under the colours of the valiant regiment de Merodé.”

“For pity’s sake, do not, on any account, be tempted to speak blasphemy,” said she.

“Der Teufel ! what a difference between girls of eighteen and girls of five-and-forty ; the first are as timid as the latter are forward. If I had said to the Baroness Fritz a thousandth part of the fine things I have said to you, she would have melted away in my arms at once. But what the deuce is the matter now ? What is it you see ; why are your eyes fixed—your nostrils dilated—your cheek flushed ? Ah, damnation ! am I tipsy, or blind ?”

The sad face of Gabrielle had suddenly changed. Her eyes sparkled with tears of astonishment and joy ; her cheeks flushed with crimson, her lips trembled.

“Ian !” she exclaimed, stretching her hands towards the window. “Ian—my cousin—come to me—save me, and take me to Ernestine !”

The surprise of Merodé at all this speedily became rage. He followed the direction of her eye from the window, and, gazing

along the sandy beach towards the north, at an angle of the rock on which the outer-wall of the tower was built, he saw the imposing figure of a Scottish Highlander standing erect, as he coolly took a survey of the whole place. He wore a green tartan kilt, with a bright cuirass and helmet; the entire pinions of an eagle surmounted the cone of the latter; a round shield was on his left arm, and a drawn claymore glittered in his right hand. On seeing this bold fellow within musket-shot of the walls, Merodé could scarcely believe his senses; but the stranger was Ian, as the sequel will show.

“Der Teufel!” said the count, almost choking with rage; “I will notch that rascal’s head for him. I knew not that any of these Scots were on this side of the Belt. Hallo! to your arms there,” he cried, rushing down-stairs to the court-yard; “to your muskets there, the quarter-guard! Kaspar—Schwindler do you see that fellow, by the water-side?”

They did see him, and fired several shots, the report of which palsied Gabrielle with fear; and she fell upon her knees, but forgot to pray, for her heart had forgotten to beat; and, like one who had been stunned by a thunderbolt, she listened, as shot after shot rang from the tower battlement over her head; and then she saw the snow-white smoke curling away on the wind.

Ian had vanished before the first shot was fired.

“He has escaped,” said Merodé, returning breathless, with knitted brows and a bitter smile; “are you rejoiced to hear it?”

Gabrielle did not reply; her thankfulness was too great for utterance.

“Ay, the tall Scot brandished his sword in defiance, and even while we saw the bullets knocking the sand about him, and whitening the trunks of the trees, he plunged into yonder thicket and disappeared. I have sent out Sergeant Swashbuckler, with a party, and hope to have him hanged as a spy before nightfall.

“And so yonder tall fellow is your lover, eh? Oh you need not deny it; I saw your eye say so. Never did a woman’s eye light up as yours was lit, save for a lover or a husband. Now little one, tell me, what see you in that great swinging Scot, that you cannot see in me? Still no answer. Are we becoming sulky, passionate, and quarrelsome? ‘Pon my soul, women are

greater enigmas than those of the Sphynx I used to hear about at Gottingen. So we have got a lover, have we? oh—very well! I shall not break my heart, believe me."

Merodé was angry, and his heart was full of bitterness and jealousy; but he concealed it admirably.

"Now that your friends are in this neighbourhood, I shall have work cut out for me; they must be received with such hospitality and honour as the arsenals of the Emperor enable us to afford to such visitors. Farewell just now, Gabrielle. I give you three days to think of it. (Three days! now, have I not the patience of Job?) If in that time you do not learn to love me, I shall hate you!" and he retired singing the fag end of an old song,

"Three days, fair maid, my love will last,
And in three days my love is past."

New hope sprang up in the bosom of Gabrielle.

Ian—and what a tide of suffocating thoughts his cherished image brought upon her mind—could not be alone, if in the vicinity of Helnœsland. He had heard of her detention there, and had come to free—perhaps to love, her.

What happiness might yet be in store for her!

Since she had been Merodé's prisoner, she had calculated the time, and found it many, many weeks, these made hundreds of hours, each of which had been counted, and watched wearily too.

She ceased to count them from that period, and began to reckon anew from the time when she had seen Ian.

He escaped the Merodeurs, and the fate their leader intended him to suffer; but many a long hour passed slowly on, and Gabrielle found herself still a prisoner in the old tower of Helnœsland.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SERPENT IN A NEW SKIN.

THE result of our solemn council of war, held over certain cans of Odensee beer, under the *Green-Tree* at Hesinge, was, *first*—that Gabrielle should be freed from Merodé, if she was still his prisoner; *secondly*, if not, that he should account for her body for body; *thirdly*, that her freedom should be obtained, if possible, by diplomacy, or threats, as we had strict orders to proceed to Elsineur, without detour or fighting under any consideration; *fourthly*, that no ransom should be paid (because we had none to pay), and *fifthly*, that if all means failed, we should risk the king's displeasure, storm Helnæsland, and knock all the Merodeurs on the head.

Attended by Phadrig, Ian departed to examine the castle before supper, and had just satisfied himself that it was a large square fortified tower, with grated windows, a battlement bristling with brass pateraroes, a barbican wall lined by six pound guns, well loopholed, and full of men, when several shots warned him to retire, and he and Phadrig, baffling the Merodeurs, reached our cantonments at Hesinge about nightfall. There, after guards were posted, and the soldiers billeted, the officers sat down to a jovial supper, at the large table under the *Green-Tree*.

Ernestine had the best apartment in the inn apportioned to her; I had command of the quarter-guard that night, with the task of posting, every two hours, twelve new sentinels round Hesinge; and (as the Merodeurs were in our vicinity) our soldiers had strict orders from Ian to sleep accoutred, in case of a surprise.

The night was moonless and cloudy, and my duty, as captain of the quarter-guard, kept me wakeful and anxious. The street was unlighted, unpaved, full of mud, and encumbered by rubbish

and pools of water, where ducks, crows, and storks squattered by day ; and where prowling dogs burrowed and snarled by night.

About the twelfth hour, when returning from visiting my sentinels, I paused for a moment in the middle of the street, to observe the dense bank of cloud that arched the sky from east to west, enclosing it on all sides save the north, where there lingered a warm yellow flush, that in so northern a region would never darken, but would brighten with the coming day. It shed a clear cold light on the gable-ends of the little street, on the sharp ridges of the roofs and chimney-tops, while their shadows, and all between me and them, were sunk in blackness and obscurity.

Ian occupied the house of the Herredsfolg, and, as the colours were deposited there, it had a special guard of twelve pikemen under Sergeant Phadrig Mhor. It stood without the village, and, to visit it, I had to pass through a narrow lane between two privet hedges, one of which enclosed the yard at the back of the inn, and where our baggage-waggons stood.

A faint light that burned in Ernestine's room arrested me.

The shutter was half closed, the light was subdued, and placed in the shade, so that I knew she had retired to rest ; yet, with that sentiment so natural to a lover, I stood for a minute gazing at that light, the rays of which were probably falling on the fair and sleeping face of her I loved so well.

At that instant I became aware suddenly that other personages were similarly occupied. Between two of our baggage-wains, two men, like peasants, gazed intently at the solitary ray which shone into the inn-yard. They were evidently lurkers. My suspicions were roused, and, instead of challenging them, I resolved to watch, and loosened the loaded pair of good Doune pistols which hung at my girdle.

The lurkers conferred together in low whispers, and then approached the window. That corner of the inn-yard which it overlooked was involved in the deepest shadow ; thus, by passing through an opening in the hedge, I stood within arm's length of them, and could perceive that they were somewhat tattered in aspect, wore conical white Danish hats with broad brims, and had enormously thick beards.

"They are thieves!" occurred to me immediately. My first thought was to seize them; my second, to fire on them; my third, to watch the issue.

After another brief conference, one left his companion to guard; and, ascending by the piled up chests of a baggage-wain, reached the little wooden balcony which projected at the back of the house, and softly approached the window of Ernestine, which, as the season was so warm, she had unguardedly left open an inch or two, and he glided into her chamber like an eel—for, as the lattice opened in two leaves from top to bottom, ingress was easily effected; but, before he entered, as the light of the night-lamp fell full on his face, I recognised Bandolo!

My heart beat like lightning! It flashed upon my mind that his comrade must be Bernhard the woodman!

To seize the latter by the ruff behind, to twist it until he was black in the face, and give him a smart blow with the steel claw of my Highland pistol, were the noiseless work of a moment. I laid him quietly on the ground at full length—with two springs reached the balcony from the roof of the baggage-wain, and with one pistol in my teeth, and the other in my right hand, crept softly in by the opened lattice.

Bandolo either believed that I was his comrade Bernhard close behind him, or artful, subtle, and ferocious as he was, he had found an object so dazzling to gaze on, that he could not resist contemplating it. By the bedside of Ernestine, he stood with an unsheathed poniard in his hand—a stiletto, round bladed and sharp as a needle.

Ah! what a moment was that! In each hand I had a loaded pistol, and I held them levelled full at his head from the other side of that pretty couch, the muslin curtains of which were half drawn aside, and yet concealed me in shadow.

I could comprehend that luxury and civilisation caused the moral depravity of such a man as Merodé, by creating wants which he could not supply, vices into which he plunged, and those false appetites which are the curse of the rich, the great, and luxurious; but here were a couple of incomprehensible rascals, doing mischief apparently for mere mischief's sake, unless we admit the love of revenge, by which Bandolo was assuredly inspired.

The night-lamp stood on a dressing-table near a round mirror, which threw a reflected light full upon the face of the beautiful sleeper.

The most divine and placid serenity were expressed in the face of Ernestine ; on her smooth forehead and dark eyebrows—on her sweet mouth and long eyelashes. She scarcely seemed to respire as she smiled amid her dreams. Partly loose, her black and silky hair had escaped from a most charming little nightcap, having three frills of fine lace, and fell in a confused mass upon a neck that was white as a new-fallen snowflake. Her hands, unadorned by either rings or bracelets, and looking a hundred times more beautiful in form and colour without them, were gently crossed upon her breast, like those of the statues in old cathedral aisles. When sleeping thus, she had all the infantile grace of Gabrielle, all her Juno-like dignity was in abeyance ; for the prettiest woman in the world can never look dignified in her nightcap. Her beauty, and the chaste purity of her slumber, might have robbed a destroying angel of his wrath ; but the hollow, ghastly, and ferocious smile of the yellow-visaged Spaniard, showed that he contemplated some terrible villainy.

Twice he placed his weapon between his teeth, and drew out a handkerchief as if to thrust into her mouth, and twice he resumed the stiletto.

"It is too much," thought I, "that his unhallowed eyes should see Ernestine as never lover saw her."

Three seconds had scarcely elapsed ; my fingers were trembling on the triggers, and the matches of my pistols were smoking as I breathed upon them.

All at once Bandolo's eyes were lighted by a savage gleam ; he placed one of his rough hands on those of Ernestine, and with the other raised his poniard for a blow, that, with this line, might have ended my story—for I never could have survived her.

My pistols were not four feet from his head—I fired one, and must own that when the smoke cleared away, I was petrified to find that, instead of being brained, Bandolo stood glaring at me with eyes that were white with fury, while his face was blackened

and his hair scorched off by the explosion. In striking Bernhard, the bullet must have dropped from my pistol, for it was found in the yard next day; but then I thought not of that, and imagined that the fellow must assuredly be *greforn*—bullet-proof, or charmed. I fired the other, but the bullet only shattered the mirror; then by one bound, Bandolo cleared the apartment, reached the top of the baggage-wain, slid down, and escaped. I sprang after him: thus, Ernestine, on being startled from sleep by the discharge of two pistols within a yard of her pretty nose, was only roused in time to see two men spring like evil spirits from the window of her bedchamber.

She uttered a succession of those shrill cries which women have at command on all occasions. The host and hostess, the jungfers, the ostlers, the quarter-guard, and several of our officers, who occupied the adjacent rooms, were all on the alert in a minute. M'Coll, holding on his kilt with one hand, and grasping a poker in the other; M'Alpine, with nothing on but his shirt and steel cap, and old Kildon, also in his shirt, with his target and claymore, with others variously accoutred, crowded to the scene of consternation and alarm; neither of which were allayed nor accounted for until I returned from a hopeless pursuit after the scout. By that time the whole inhabitants of the inn were in a terrible state of commotion; but Master Bernhard, who had been found senseless in the yard, was fortunately secured by the care of Sergeant M'Gillvray, who had ordered the quarter-guard to tie him with ropes, and retain him as a prisoner in the kitchen below.

CHAPTER XXX.

BERNHARD'S OFFER.

WHEN I reflected by what a narrow chance Ernestine had escaped a terrible assassination ; when I thought of what my emotions, and the emotions of all, would have been, had we found her in the morning — but the idea was horror ! I turned the buckle of my belt behind me, and after assuring Ernestine that she was neither killed nor wounded, but only frightened, took my sword in my hand, and ordered M'Gillvray to bring the prisoner to the *Green-Tree*, before the door of the inn, where, as morning was now advanced, the waitresses were preparing breakfast for the officers.

The personal appearance of Master Bernhard was in no way improved by the tap I had given him on the head ; for a quantity of blood that flowed from the wound had clotted his shock-head of hair, and streaked the hard lines of his coarse and repulsive visage, like the war paint of an Indian.

“ Well, *schelm*,” said I ; “ what have you to urge, that I should not hang you on the branch overhead as an ornament to our goodman's sign ?”

“ That we should never take away what we cannot give back,” growled Bernhard.

“ We are old acquaintances now,” said I ; “ you remember the hut at Korslack, and the night with the Merodeurs ? Have you always acted upon the principle of never taking away that which you cannot restore ?”

“ Herr Captain, I have tried to do so,” he replied ; looking anxiously at me, and anon at one of the ostlers, who was quietly knotting a running noose over one of the branches of the tree under which I was seated. “ If I take a man's purse I can return it—but his life—oh, Herr Captain !”

“Have you never taken a man’s life, Master Bernhard?”

“Have *you* or your soldiers never taken one, Herr Captain?”

“You are an impudent rascal!” said I, losing patience.

“Perhaps I am,” said he; “yet I may be of more service to you than you imagine.”

“You are the man who assisted Bandolo to decoy the daughters of the Count of Carlstein from Nyekiöbing, and betrayed one to the Count of Merodé.”

“Betray is a harsh word, Herr Schottlander. I am but a poor fellow who, for a rixdollar, will serve any one. I was Merodé’s valet at Vienna; he accused me of liking his laced doublets better than his livery, so we parted in dudgeon; but the real secret was, that he discovered his mistress bestowing on me, for nothing, all those blandishments which cost *him* a thousand doubloons in the year. She was sent to the galleys; I turned woodman, and picked up a ducat or a florin now and then in various ways. Bandolo was acting the gentleman, and required a valet to carry his mails. I sailed with him to many places, where he was picking up information for the Count Tilly, who always pays for it like a prince. Bandolo brought two ladies with him from Falster; ‘twas no business of mine—he has often ladies with him. I attended one—he the other, and so we parted company in the dark near Eckernfjord; with the youngest, I fell among the Merodeurs, who cheated me of a thousand ducats, which I was to bring Bandolo from the count. I have usually been the scoutmaster’s ass, or scapegoat, but I will be so no longer, and will gladly become valet or groom to any Schottish officer who will pay me.”

“Thank you, Master Bernhard,” said I, ironically; “well, ostler, is that rope ready?”

“I am making all the haste I can, Herr Captain.”

“Do not hurry yourself, my good man, I beseech you,” said Bernhard, giving a snake-like glance at the ostler.

“And this lady,” said I.

“What lady, Herr?”

“Zounds! the lady with whom you fell among the Merodeurs.”

“She is now in Helnœsland.”

“In the castle?”

“With Count Merodé.”

“Confound that dogged front of thine!” said I, grinding my teeth with anger, on thinking of all the mischief this villain had aided and abetted. “You hear, gentlemen,” I added, “he says that Lady Gabrielle is in Helnœsland with Merodé.”

“If he can be believed—the point is certain,” said Ian.

“I see no reason to doubt him, Ian—now when he is on the point of death.”

“Death—oh, do not, for the love of Heaven, say that, Herr Captain!” implored Bernhard in an agitated voice. “It is a sad word for a poor fellow to hear.”

“A sadder still for a rich one,” said Ian.

Held in the strong grasp of two athletic soldiers, he was totally incapable of resistance; and the muskets of the quarter-guard kept him completely in awe. The noose was ready; agony bedewed his pallid face with perspiration. His knees trembled, and he gave me a glance so imploring that my heart failed me. Amidst the confusion of a brawl I might have seen a dozen such fellows shot, and felt no compunction; but to hang up this cowardly and crime-steeped rascal, with his terror verging on despair, was quite another thing; and I began heartily to wish that his life or death had been in the hands of the Herredsfoged of the district, or any other than mine.

“Stay,” said Ian; “one feature in this fellow’s character is evident. He will do any thing for money.”

“If I could serve you, Herr, or *you*, with my life,” implored Bernhard.

“Well—you know yonder castle of Helnœsland?” said Ian.

“As well, Herr Colonel, as if it belonged to me.”

“And the Merodeurs?”

“Most of them—they were my comrades at Vienna.”

“In prison, I suppose. Well, if your life is spared, will you undertake to guide me with two hundred musketeers, on a dark night, to that sallyport which faces the north?”

“I will, Herr; but the Merodeurs are a thousand strong! and two hundred musketeers—ouf! they will be but a mouthful in Helnœsland.”

“That is not your business—Dioul!”

"I will make a bargain with the Herr Rollo," said Bernhard, gathering courage at this glimpse of life and hope. "Merodé was to pay Bandolo a thousand ducats for the young grafine, Gabrielle of Carlstein, of which I was to receive my share. Merodé deceived us, and, not having the ducats at the time, kept the lady, and troubled himself no more about the matter. I am but a poor fellow; look at my doublet; it has as many holes as there are days in the year. Well, Herr—for four hundred ducats I will bring the young lady to you safe and sound, without the uproar of two hundred musketeers falling into Helnœsland in the night, and not knowing which way to turn. In terror at the noise and din of such a piece of work, the young lady will be sure to conceal herself; and your men might all be shot or taken by the Merodeurs, and nothing achieved after all."

"Besides," said Ian, in a low voice; "I have the king's strict orders to march for Elsineur, without firing a shot."

"Can we trust a man who is beyond the pale of the law?" said I.

"I did not make the law, mein Herr," said Bernhard; "if so, I should not have been outlawed—or called a robber, or so forth; four hundred ducats will be quite a fortune to a poor fellow like me. I will bring you the young lady, and *then* the money can be paid me down on this table, under that beech-tree. Is it a bargain, Herr Captain, and gentlemen Schottlanders?"

"On my honour it is," said Ian; and Bernhard gave him a glance of thankfulness and joy.

"Four hundred ducats!" said I; "where the devil are we to raise such a sum? The regiment has been without pay for two months past."

"Assemble the officers by beat of drum," said Ian.

The drum was beaten, and in five minutes they were all assembled under the *Green-Tree*, thirty Highlanders, all stately men as ever drew a sword; and to them Ian, the lieutenant-colonel, related our dilemma.

Every man of them opened the mouth of his sporran.

"Hold your steel-bonnet, kinsman," said Ian to the sergeant, Mhor.

Phadrig held his helmet inverted, and every officer threw in what he could spare; some who had not even a brass bodle, cut the silver or gold buttons from their coats, or twisted off some links from those gold chains which our Scottish officers usually wore during the Thirty Years' war. I broke off ten from mine; Major Fritz gave twenty florins; and Bernhard's eyes glistened with joy, as the coin of every kind and value—silver, brass, and copper, buttons, chains, and rings—rattled into the helmet, where a sum amounting to more than eight hundred ducats was collected.

“This is a pretty sum to give such a rascal!” said M‘Alpine, who had just twisted the gold tassels from his sporran.

“It is rewarding treachery and crime,” said another; “think of how many brave fellows peril their lives in the field for a stiver per hour.”

“By the head of Alpine! I would rather fight Merodé than pay it,” said M‘Alpine.

“But the king’s orders,” said our lieutenant-colonel.

“Ah, true! I had forgotten.”

“Fellow,” said I to Bernhard; “if you deceive me, tremble! for you have just one more in this world to outwit.”

“Who, mein Herr—Bandolo?”

“The devil!”

“What a character you give yourself, cousin Philip,” said Ian, and all our officers laughed as they sat down to breakfast; “but to business. Get this fellow despatched on his errand; and, until he returns to redeem his word, Phadrig, thou shalt keep the contributions. Away with him and them, too! Let us to breakfast, for I am like a famished wolf.”

It was arranged that about nightfall sixty soldiers should march to a lonely place about five miles from Helnœsland, for the purpose of meeting Gabrielle, and escorting her with her guide to Hesinge. The latter was immediately despatched with a note, written by Ernestine, acquainting her with our vicinity (but of that she was already partly aware), and the necessity of trusting implicitly to the bearer; who, though he had deceived them once, would not do so again.

“For mercy’s sake, gentlemen!” said Bernhard before depart-

ing; "keep our compact a secret, lest Count Tilly's scout, Bandolo, who seems to be every where at once, may discover and frustrate the whole. He hears every thing, I believe, like Grön Jette, or the wild huntsman."

Bernhard placed the letter in one of the many pockets of his tattered doublet, and set out on his mission. It was not without many conflicting thoughts and arguments that we agreed to intrust Gabrielle to this man, who was doubtless the perpetrator of many frightful crimes; but necessity owns no law, and none but a well-known vagabond could have found easy ingress, or egress, by the gates and guards of the illustrious Count of Merodé.

Now, as these volumes are not a romance, and there is not the least necessity for keeping my readers behind a curtain, I may as well relate, that, as the great father of all mischief would have it, Bandolo, on escaping from the inn-yard, had taken shelter in the very branches of that magnificent beech, under which the compact with Bernhard had been so fully discussed and arranged. It was a vast and thickly foliaged tree; and from the table that encircled its stem, he had easily reached a place of concealment and security.

There he had sat, perched right over our heads, during the examination of Bernhard; there he had narrowly escaped discovery, when the ostler was knotting the noose over one of the lower branches; and he had heard all our arrangements and conversation, while sitting with his heels dangling over the sumptuous breakfast to which thirty of our officers sat down, encircling the board and the broad beech-tree, like Knights of the Round Table; and there he had seen Bernhard receive the letter, and depart for Helnœsland, on that mission which he resolved to frustrate, and turn, perhaps, to his own account.

But there he was compelled to sit during the slow passing hours of a long and sunny summer day, for the little street of Hesinge was thronged by our soldiers; and there were constantly some of our officers drinking Moselle, Neckar, or Odensee beer, playing at ombre or chess, under the tree, and the night fell before the bravo or scout, for he was both, was enabled to quit his hiding-place; and, after avoiding our sentinels, set out,

with stiffened limbs and a heart that burned with rage and spite, for Helnœsland.

Moreover, he took with him a pair of steel Doune pistols belonging to Phadrig Mhor, who somewhat witlessly had left them on the table.

This must have been about ten at night.

One hour before that, sixty of our musketeers under my command, with several officers as volunteers, marched in the same direction, and by the most retired roads, towards the head of a bay, the name of which I have forgotten; but it is formed by the promontory of Helnœs, on which stands the old castle, then occupied by the Merodeurs—that regiment of terrible memory!

CHAPTER XXXI.

HOW BERNHARD DELIVERED THE LETTER.

GABRIELLE had now counted that eight-and-thirty hours had elapsed since she had seen the figure of Ian appear for a moment at that angle of rock, which was the first point whereon she hurried to gaze in the morning, and the last one at night. So far as she knew, no effort had yet been made to free her. Could his appearance, then, have been reality? Was it not one of those flitting shadows, those Doublegangers, those dire forebodings of coming evil, of which she had heard so often in the wild stories of Germany? Or was it merely a conjuration of her own excited fancy, which clung to the image of Ian as one might cling to the memory of the dead; for though Ian, by many a kindness and by a thousand pretty attentions had (*unconsciously*) left nothing undone to make this young and simple girl love him, she had no hope of ever being loved in return; for, true as the needle to the pole, his heart ever turned to that provoking Highland love, which he had left behind him in the land of the rock and eagle.

Of late, Ian's image had recurred less frequently to the mind of Gabrielle, for in her excessive tribulation she wept for her father and sister, and thought of them alone; but now the sudden vision of that well-remembered form, so stately and so graceful, with the glittering accoutrements, the waving tartan, and the eagle's double pinions towering on his polished helmet, brought back all that secret hope to her heart, and *those* dear thoughts, as yet unuttered save to Ernestine. Again the old fascination stole over her senses, like a chaste and mellowed light along a waveless sea; for tumult, storms, and wrath, lay slumbering in its placid depths.

Evening had come again. Gabrielle was alone, and seated in

one of the little arched windows of her room. All was silent in that old castle by the sea; not a breath of wind stirred the leaves of the green oaks or copper beeches; not a murmur floated along the waters of the narrow Belt.

The remembrance of the kind and loveable manner, the dark and somewhat severely handsome face of Ian Dhu, excited in her breast a new and unmitigated repugnance for her tormentor, Merodé; though the count was also a handsome man, and (save when an occasional gleam of misanthropy or hatred flashed in his eyes) had usually a merry and reckless aspect.

Gabrielle was enduring another evening of her mechanical existence, watching the daylight fade along the sea, and as the sun sank behind the gravel hills, the low, flat, naked shores of Juteland—the Jylland of the Danes—the foamy crests of the dancing billows sparkled in gold, and the long sandy shore was steeped in the same saffron light.

Merodé's offer of marriage, after every other means of persuasion had failed, she considered a fresh insult; and about an hour before, he had left her, with a remembrance that the three days he had given her to think of it were rapidly drawing to a close.

“I assure you, my dear Gabrielle,” he had said, in his usual easy and assured way; “your marriage with me will suit your father's ideas exactly. In fact he will be quite delighted to find that he is still likely to have a son-in-law a count; for by this time he will probably have learned all I told you yesterday, of poor Kœningheim's death. Now, if *he* had not been in such a devil of a hurry to die, old Rupert-with-the-Red-plume would have had both his daughters countesses; but let us not despair, for of counts there are more than plenty between this and the ramparts of Belgrade.”

A voice below her window startled her; she looked down, and saw a tattered malion, with a shock head of dark hair, that mingled with an enormous and untrimmed beard, holding in his hands a conical white hat and knotted stick, and with a long knife in his girdle. He was seated on a fragment of that rock on which the castle was built; and one side of which jutted into the tideless sea, while the outworks seemed to be based on drifted sand. The stranger waved his battered hat. Gabrielle shudder-

ed and withdrew with a sudden emotion of anger; for she remembered the pretended valet of Bandolo, and their voyage in the dogger of Dantzig.

The visiter muttered an oath, and shrunk close to the wall, lest a Merodeur, who leaned on his musket on the partisan of the tower overhead, should observe him. After a time Gabrielle resumed her seat at the window, but immediately rose again, for the man was still there. He made many signs which she did not understand; sometimes touching his hat; at other times placing one finger beside his nose and winking slyly; then kissing his hand and laying it on his heart.

These were all Master Bernhard's modes of evincing a desire to communicate something that was secret and important, while at the same time he vowed fidelity and truth—and no doubt the memory of the helmet full of trinkets, &c., awaiting him at Hesinge, made the rascal (for the time) true as steel to his mission.

Believing that he was mocking her, Gabrielle again withdrew with a sad and swelling heart; for now such a trivial circumstance as the supposed insolence of this man fretted her.

On her pretty face disappearing a second time, Bernhard uttered a tremendous oath, gave his conical hat a violent punch on the crown, and began to whistle on two of his fingers, uttering low and peculiar notes, indicative of various things best known to himself, who had acquired this accomplishment in the common prison and Rasp-haus; but fears of the sentinel recurred to him, and he was compelled to revert to patience and rending his beard, which made his face closely resemble a black furze bush, with a cat looking out of it.

After a time Gabrielle returned to the window. The sun had now set; its golden beams still lingered on the wavelets of the Belt; but the man was yet beneath her window, seated on the shelf of rock, where the yellow sea was rippling; and again he greeted her with his whole vocabulary of nods, winks, and signs.

"This is strange pertinacity," thought Gabrielle; "the man is intoxicated!"

At last, after searching in a deep pocket of his tattered doublet,

he fished up a little note, and displayed it with a glance of triumph, holding the while his conical hat between it and the castle, lest the sentinel should see. It was evident that he cared less about being seen himself, than having his letter intercepted.

"A letter—from whom can it be?" thought Gabrielle, while her heart beat with increased velocity; "and in *his* care, too! 'tis some fresh insult—an officer of Merodé has discovered that I am here, and takes this mode of sending me a billet, expressing a love, perhaps, as good as his commander's."

Full of anger again at this idea, she again retired; and then Bernhard bequeathed himself again to the devil—tore his hat with his teeth, and stamped with rage. Curiosity made Gabrielle peep again, and then Bernhard held up the letter with a sulky and indignant air, and made a motion indicative of his intention to tear it in pieces, if it was not accepted. Suddenly connecting the billet with the recent appearance of Ian, she threw open her window, and Bernhard with a joyful grin held up the letter.

"From Hesinge, lady," said he in a husky whisper; "from your sister."

"From Ernestine! ah, forgive me, forgive me for my reluctance and delay!" replied Gabrielle, while her heart swelled almost to bursting with sudden emotion; "ah, Heaven! how am I to obtain it—the window is so high?"

"If you had a cord—quick, or that schelm of a Merodeur on the tower top may send a bullet this way to pay the postage."

Gabrielle gave a hurried glance about her. There was not in all her apartment a piece of cord. Ernestine's letter was not twenty feet from her; she was in despair, and trembling with eagerness.

"O joy!" she exclaimed, as a sudden thought seized her; "*this* will do!" and seizing her scissors, in a moment she ripped off six or seven yards of silver braid from the skirt of her fardingale—a blue satin brocade, one of many that Merodé (who had at his disposal selections of all the best wardrobes in Juteland) had given her, and which, for lack of others, she had been compelled to wear.

To this cord, which he thought was much too valuable for such a purpose, Bernhard tied the note; Gabrielle towed it in like a little fish, and, kissing her sister's handwriting, fell on her knees to thank Heaven for sending her this; a mist came over her eyes—they were full of hot salt tears; and though she trembled with eagerness to read, for some moments she found herself incapable of doing so.

It was the familiar handwriting of her sister; but hurriedly and tremulously written. Advice and directions were intermingled with ardent expressions of regard; for though they were the daughters of different mothers, the love between these two girls was as strong as esteem, affection, and the tie of blood could make it. There was a difference in their love, too; for Gabrielle looked up to her tall and dark-eyed sister with something of a daughter's reliance and respect; and Ernestine, from the habit of giving advice, and taking charge of her blue-eyed and merry little sister (for she never could alter her first impression, that Gabrielle was yet a child), had that regard for her which we always have for those whom we protect.

Interrupted at every word or two by reiterated expressions of sisterly regard, the letter urged that she should immediately escape, if possible, from Helnesland, as the Highlanders could only remain at Hesinge for another day, after which they must march for Helsingör; and that she must trust implicitly to the bearer—("What a man to confide in!" thought Gabrielle, glancing at Bernhard's tremendous beard)—the bearer, who could conduct her to a place near Helnes, where friends would be waiting to receive her.

"Escape—but how am I to escape?" thought Gabrielle, as her eyes filled with tears, and she pressed her hands upon her burning temples; "all the doors of the passages and ambulatories between this and the court are kept closed and locked by Merodé or his creatures; and the wall—it is so high! and I have only a day to decide; ah, dear Ernestine, I have no hope—none—none!"

Again and again she read the letter, in the hope that it might contain some hint; but there was no such item there.

"Are you coming, then—not just now; but when the dark-

"ness sets in?" said Bernhard, who was still sitting below the window, and to whom she turned for some advice.

"How can I descend? I will do any thing—any thing to escape from this."

"Could you slide down a stout cord if I brought one?"

"I believe that I could."

"Are you not certain, young lady?"

"Oh yes! I am quite certain."

"Well, by ten o'clock I will be back again, for I do not like sitting in view of that fellow on the tower head. I am in expectation of receiving a shot every moment. Listen—collect all the valuables you have, for I will expect a little fee from you for my trouble; I am only a poor fellow who has lost his employment by the war. When you have them all ready, secure your door inside."

"Alas! 'tis generally bolted on the *outside*."

"Well, pile whatever you can move against it—a bed, an almerie, chairs, tables, every thing that will obstruct entrance, and give us an opportunity of getting clear off; at least, so far as yonder sandhills beyond the thicket, for there your friends will be waiting you, even before this perhaps. Have all prepared, lady; in two hours I will be back with a stout cord from one of the boats moored at the point yonder."

Gabrielle had not words to thank him, but kissed both her hands, and then, stealthily as a cat, he crept away. He had measured the wall by a glance of his eye. In many an escape and robbery he had scaled and descended a higher and more dangerous; thus he felt assured that Gabrielle must be able to do so, too.

She turned to a sundial that was carved on the corner of one of the windows, and found that it wanted exactly two hours of the time at which this man was to return for her; and she was all impatience. Could Gabrielle have conceived, or been informed, of half the atrocities this outlaw had committed, she would rather, perhaps, have remained with Merodé than trusted herself to his guidance; but she had a pure soul and a charitable heart, and viewed the emotions and impulses of other minds through the innocent medium of her own. Thus, though she knew Bernhard

to be the person who brought her to Merodé, she now implicitly believed that he had lost his way at Eckernförd, and been deceived, as well as herself. She even imagined that her repugnance to his aspect was not so great as at first; the villainous leer of his yellow eyes, seemed to be only a comical twinkle; and his exuberance of beard and matted mass of hair, like his rags and worn shoes, might only be the result of poverty; and had she not heard Father Ignatius preach, that it was wrong to despise the poor, for they were peculiarly the children of Heaven? It seemed wicked to suspect the poor man who had come so far to free and serve her; and, as if to make reparation, she selected the most beautiful of her own rings (setting aside all the more valuable and magnificent jewels with which Merodé had encumbered her room) as a gift for her liberator.

Half an hour had elapsed, and now the sun's rays seemed to tremble above the western horizon and the level shores of Juteland.

“In two hours and a half I shall be with Ernestine! Two hours and a half—ah, my Heaven! can it be possible? At last! at last! Oh, how I shall kiss her, and weep upon her breast! My dear, good, kind Ernestine! My sister and my mother, too!”

Thus did Gabrielle mutter from time to time, as she watched the rays slowly revolve round the sundial, and saw the shadow of the gnomon gradually fade away; as the evening bells began to toll, the sun sank behind Sleben, and his rays shot upwards, diverging with tenfold brilliance as the coast between, became a darker and more defined outline. The setting of the sun was the first approach to night. She beheld it with joy, and, by the pure transparent atmosphere of the northern evening, continued to watch the growing shadows, and that landscape on which she hoped she was now gazing for the *last time*.

Placid as a mirror of polished steel the water lay in the fiörd; the scenery was calm and tranquil. Meadows of emerald green bespangled with wild-flowers, or young corn-fields bending under the breath of the soft summer wind, covered the long and narrow promontory of Helnæs. Rising from the turf fires and cottage chimneys, the silvery smoke curled far into the amber-coloured sky of evening; on one side, lay a scene of peace and content-

ment, beautiful and rich as browsing cattle, the fragrance of orchards and flowers, corn and honey, could make it; on the other, lay the long blue waters of the Belt, winding between Sleswig and Fuhnen-the-Fine.

All this was visible from her window in that grim old castle, which was founded on a mass of rock, that, darkly and grey, jutted from among the golden-coloured sand into the chafing sea. Silvering every wavelet that rippled the calm surface of the narrow ocean, the soft moon rose slowly above those level shores that hem in the waves, from whence sailed those savage but adventurous conquerors, who gave their name to all the land between the British channel and the Scottish frontier.

Now, Gabrielle remembered the advice of Bernhard concerning the barricading of her door; she rose hastily to execute it; and saw at a glance, that, by placing a table between it and an angle of the wall, she could effectually bar all entrance; for the door (which opened inwards) was of oak, hinged with iron, and though old, was of great strength, being received into the stone work all round; thus, if so secured, nothing less forcible than a cannon-shot, or a battering-ram, could affect it.

“Ah! how foolish I have been in never perceiving this before! How many nights might I have slept in comparative peace, nor trusted to the lingering honour and casual pity of Merodé.”

Thus thought Gabrielle.

But half an hour, she calculated, was wanting of the time when Bernhard would return; and she was preparing to secure her door in the manner described, when the sound of steps in the passage arrested her; the door was hastily opened, and her agitated heart almost ceased to beat when she beheld the Count Merodé!

CHAPTER XXXII.

CAN SHE ESCAPE NOW?

ULRICK entered, and, by the manner in which he closed the door and crossed the room, Gabrielle could perceive with terror (though there was no other light than those afforded by the set sun and rising moon), that he was quite intoxicated. Bad as he was, he had hitherto treated her—all things considered—with remarkable respect; and, never until this important night, had fatally dared to conceive the idea of a visit at such an hour.

Gabrielle had always thought, that, as love could not exist without a returned affection, the flame in Merodé's heart would soon expire; but the pretty casuist did not know that it was not the love of a pure heart which animated the count. Had it been so, she had long since been free.

The count wore a magnificent suit of dark blue velvet, adorned by sparkling diamond buttons and seed pearls. On his head was a montero cap with a tall feather, the quill of which was studded with diamonds. His shoulder-belt and boots were of spotless white leather, and his broad collar was of the richest lace; but cap and feather, belt and doublet, were all awry, the latter being half buttoned in the wrong holes, while his plume hung down his back.

The count was reeling; and, in the twilight, Gabrielle could perceive that his face was flushed, his eyes bloodshot, and inflamed by passion and excitement. He closed the door of the room, and, to her inexpressible alarm—locked it! He then, with a maudlin expression of admiration on his face, and with outspread arms, approached her, but she eluded him, and he sank into a chair; his cap fell off, and after several ineffectual attempts to recover it, he said, with many pauses—

“My darling must not be alarmed if I come thus to visit her

at an hour so untimous ; 'tis for a moment—only for a moment—pon my soul it is—bah ! you are not angry with me, are you?"

" Will your excellency never weary of persecuting me ?"

" Little rogue, you *are* angry !"

" Oh no ! my lord, I am not," replied Gabrielle, trembling with fear and perplexity.

" How could you be angry ? 'twould be very cruel ; 'tis only a bridegroom's privilege, for we are to be married to-morrow by Camargo's chaplain. Der Teufel ! yes—I will show you a magnificent dress which our quartermaster picked up somewhere ; it is worth ten thousand ducats if it is worth a 'stiver ! and you are to be married in that, my pretty one. It will almost stand with seed pearls and embroidery—yes, 'tis devilish fine, I assure you ; and in it my little bride will look magnificent. Ah ! come and give me a kiss ! Do not be angry, 'tis the wine—strong wine. The dress, it belonged to the Countess of Fehmarn, old King Kit's one-eyed wife—I mean the left-hand of old King Christian. 'Tis a glorious fashion that of his, marrying one wife for love and another for money. If the emperor would only marry my sister Josephine in that way, I should be sure of my marshal's baton—but what do I care for money ? We don't want it—we Merodeurs—no ! we pay all our scores with a roll on the drum, or by hanging up the burgomaster. I wonder if the devil will be satisfied with a check on the same bank ; but he beats a little on the drum himself, for we all know the devil's tattoo."

" Oh, what a sensual wretch is this when compared to Ian Dhu, that soul of honour !" thought Gabrielle, as Merodé rocked himself on a chair during his long and rambling speech, which was interrupted by many a hiccup.

Every moment she expected the arrival of Bernhard, and now she was locked into her chamber with her intoxicated tormentor—locked in hopelessly for the night.

" Gabrielle, Gabrielle," said the count ; " dost love me any better than at first ?"

" My lord," began Gabrielle (willing to humour him a little), " first love—"

" A fig for first love !" cried he, snapping his fingers, and

making ineffectual efforts to rise. " 'Tis all stuff, and makes a bold fellow timid and retiring—and then the girl, with her mystery, modesty, and touch-me-not face! Bah! 'tis enough to give one a fit of the spleen. Second love is founded upon judgment, and is strengthened and matured by it—yes—I am a philosopher—d—me! But if such is the case with a second or third love, what must be the strength and maturity, the fervour and ferocity of a twentieth love, like mine, for thee? Oh, Gabrielle—Gabrielle, come hither, you little devil, and kiss me!"

At that moment the shrill low whistle of Bernhard sounded beneath the window, and made Gabrielle start.

"So you will not come to me—eh? Ah—true love is always modest and retiring—it likes mystery, too! How good to think that I have had you under lock and key for so many weeks, and not one of my merry rascals—even Count John of Brisgau or Jehan de Vart—have found you out! Come to me, I tell you, or I shall lose patience; one kiss, little one—only one."

Gabrielle remained aloof, and wept with mingled emotions of shame and mortification, then Merodé began to swear, and say some things that made the poor girl turn alternately cherry red and deadly pale. Again she heard Bernhard whistling, and her anxiety was almost insupportable.

"Der Teufel! yes—to-morrow is the happy day—and Camargo's chaplain—(Camargo's, is it not? oh, yes!)—will do the affair for us; those whom Heaven and Camargo's chaplain have put together—let no rascal put asunder. Right—Henckers! my girl, why do you spin round in that fashion?—and who is that who whistles there?—

"Three days—three days, my love will last,
And—in—three days—my—love is past."

After this, a few indescribable snorts and flourishes were the only signs of life he made; his head had sunk forward on his breast, and fearfully Gabrielle approached him. He was in a profound and unmistakeable drunken sleep. Gabrielle's heart beat like lightning; she sprang to the window, and below, in the twilight, discerned the dark figure of Bernhard.

"You have appeared at last," he growled in a low voice; "I thought you were never coming."

"Pardon me—I have been watched."

"Watched—by whom?" asked Bernhard in a low whisper.

"Merodé."

"Gott in Himmel! do you say so? and he——"

"Is now asleep, as fast as wine can make him."

"Quick, then! Lower your cord, and draw up the rope, for we have not a moment to lose. If the rounds pass, they will fire, and I would not run the risk of being shot for all the women between the Elbe and the Oder."

Gabrielle lowered the silver cord, by which she had received Ernestine's letter, and thereby towed in the end of a stout rope.

"Oh, to what shall I fasten this?" she asked.

"How should I know?" growled Bernhard; "to any thing—but be quick—any thing that will cross the narrow window and sustain your weight."

The long iron tongs by which the turf was placed on the hearth now met the eye of Gabrielle; she tied the rope with her pretty and trembling hands to the centre of them, and placed them across the aperture of the narrow window, thus forming a double bar, strong enough to sustain the weight of a cuirassier armed cap-à-pee—horse and all.

"Hist!" said Bernhard, as he steadied the end of the rope; "be sure, that you have knotted it well, and fixed it crosswise, for I have no wish that you should slip and break my neck, to say nothing of your own bones. Now then, descend, if you please."

"But I must cover my poor hands, or the rope will fret them."

"Bravo! get a pair of gloves, a handkerchief, or any thing," said Bernhard, who—vagabond as he was—began to be quite charmed by the courage and foresight of this noble girl; and he felt a satisfaction in serving her. Never before had such an honest glow spread through his savage heart.

Gabrielle placed a soft handkerchief over each of her tender hands, and by the assistance of a chair, passed over the window-sole; then the night wind blew her light dress and her fair hair about, for, in her haste, hood and mantle were alike forgotten. Merodé still slept like a dormouse, and it was evident that he would continue to do so until morning; but the foreboding

thought flashed upon the mind of the fugitive, that she might only be flying from one danger to fall into another.

"My God!" sighed Gabrielle; "thou wilt be kind, and protect a poor girl who cannot protect herself. Oh yes—I will confide in Thee!"

Inspired by this thought she took courage and slid in a moment to the ground, alighting with a shock which Bernhard lessened, by partly receiving her in his arms. Had she known all—or even a few of the crimes his hands had committed—she would have shrunk from their touch as from death.

She could scarcely whisper her thanks, and indeed Bernhard, who heard the tramp of the approaching rounds on the tower above, did not give her time; for, seizing her hand, he led her softly and hurriedly round an angle of the outworks, from whence, concealed by palisadoes and shrubbery, they were to creep towards the road that led by the margin of the bay towards Hesinge

Next morning Merodé was awakened by the quartermaster's wife, knocking at the door of Gabrielle's room. He started from his drunken slumber, and opened the door with an air of perplexity. Frau Rümple appeared with the famous pearl dress upon her arm, and with a bridal veil and chaplet in her hands; but on seeing the bewildered count, she curtailed with a wagish smile, and said that Colonel Camargo's chaplain had arrived.

"Der Teufel!" cried Merodé, as he rushed to the open window, and saw the chair, the crossed tongs, and the cord yet dangling by the wall. "Call Sergeant Swaschbückler! by the Henckers! my bird has flown!"

On one hand, favoured by the moon, which lit their devious path, and on the other, shrouded by high palisadoes painted green, and stunted trees that grew upon the peninsula, Gabrielle and her guide had rapidly and stealthily pursued their way towards a ridge, where grew a clump of trees. It was visible in dark outline between them and the last flush of dusky yellow that lingered at the horizon. The clump was about three or four miles distant; and near it, Bernhard informed Gabrielle that a party of Scottish Highlanders were halted.

As the distance increased between her and the grim tower on

Helnœsland, and when she began to be more reassured, Gabrielle, who tied a handkerchief over her flowing and beautiful hair, turned from time to time, and examined the face of her guide. It was hideous! its aspect was terrible; for ignorance and crime had done every thing to destroy the intellectual, and develop the animal propensities of Bernhard, whose surname I never learned. Gabrielle observed that his stealthy eyes wore a constant expression of alarm; he seemed to be in perpetual dread of meeting some one.

Fear on her part, with anxiety and avarice on his, enabled them to walk so well, that in three quarters of an hour they were close to the thicket of trees, when a man approached them from under their very shadow. This was the first person they had met since leaving Helnœs.

Gabrielle shrunk close to the side of Bernhard, who grasped the haft of his knife; while an exclamation of rage and fear escaped his lips, on finding himself confronted by—Bandolo!

It was indeed that man, whom (of all others in the world) he dreaded most to meet at such a moment. In each hand he had a cocked pistol—the Highland tacks which he had stolen from Phadrig Mhor.

Bernhard had only his knife, and, as he unsheathed it, Bandolo swore on seeing its blue and sinister gleam. Then he uttered one of those exulting laughs, to which his ferocious character imparted a sound not unlike the growl of a panther.

“Ha! ha! ha! Well, fool—you knew not, that while you made that precious bargain at the inn-door of Hesinge, I was seated among the branches of the *Green-Tree* above. *Maldicion de Dios!* but this is a meeting, as unexpected to me as it seems unwelcome to you, Camarada Bernhard!”

The Spaniard and the German glared at each other like two wild-cats, and Gabrielle felt as if she was about to die with terror, between them.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CRAPE SCARF OF M'ALPINE.

WHILE relating the adventures of Gabrielle, as I afterwards learned them, I must not lose sight of my own.

With sixty Highland soldiers, accompanied by Angus Roy M'Alpine, Kildon, and one or two other officers, I had formed a little bivouac at a small clump of trees, about three or four miles from the castle of Helnœs; there we waited anxiously the result of Bernhard's mission, and made many resolutions, if it failed, to bring on the whole regiment, and, though we had only twelve hours to spare, set the king's commands at naught, and—if Ian consented—take the Merdeurs by storm.

We lay in concealment near the thicket, and our advanced sentinels sat among the long grass beyond it, rolled up in their green plaids, and were quite invisible; for we made use of every precaution that Scottish warfare and Highland hunting made familiar to us, to approach Helnœs as near as possible without being seen.

Our *Weywacht*, as the Germans would call it, was made on a spot of the greenest turf; there we piled our loaded muskets; opened our havresacks, and every man who had been able to procure a bottle containing spirit of any kind, from Neckar down to plain Odenzee beer, produced it, and the quaighs of wood and horn were passed round from man to man without distinction, in the good old northern fashion; for the patriarchal system, and the acknowledged relationship of the lowest in station to the highest in rank, is one of the finest features in social Highland life. Every Gordon is the kinsman of Lord Huntly, and every Campbell is a cousin to Breadalbane and Macallum Mhor, as the humblest gilly is the kinsman of his chief.

Different from many a bivouac I have seen—where (like the

camps of the Egyptians of Scotland, or the gitanos of Spain) it seemed to be little better than systematic vagabondizing in the cold and rain, with no covering but a blanket, nestling together for warmth—on this summer evening our halt near that fiord, which is formed by the long narrow promontory of Helnes, resembled a pleasure party.

We saw the sun set in the amber west, and the moon rise in all her silver glory; the soft night wind rustled the leaves above our heads, and bore on its breath that peculiar fragrance which night exhales from the teeming land and darkened sea. Afar off, several beacons of turf and wood were burning on distant promontories, to mark the shoals and sands; and, amid the summer haze, they gleamed on the trembling waters of the Belt like flickering *ignes fatui*.

In the lower parts of the level landscape, large pools of water glittered here and there in the rushy hollows; a shower of rain had fallen about mid-day, and now a bright silver haze floated over the enamelled meadows. Near our bivouac a stream gurgled on its way almost noiselessly to the sea, unlike our mountain burns at home, which, after a shower, rush in fury sheeted with foam, and bearing at times rocks, trees, and stones, to the German ocean or the Caledonian sea.

As the time wore slowly on, and I did nothing in the way of conversation to lighten its tedium, but sat at the foot of a tree lost in thought, old Kildon, as he filled the quaighs of all around him, proposed that we should have a song or a story after the good old fashion at home; and he forthwith set the example by singing, in very good style, that old and dirge-like song which Ossian has addressed to *The Owl*, and which elicited a burst of applause from our soldiers.

“*Aire Muire!* let us have a story now,” said he, “or we shall all mope here like the owls of the song; come, Phadrig Mhor—a story; or do you, Rollo, tell us something. You did not study at the King’s College for naught—and, faith! that same study must have cost the old Laird of the Craig a good many silver bonnet-pieces.”

“He is in the region of clouds,” said M’Alpine, “and has nothing to tell or propose.”

"Except your health, Angus," said I; "and that you will please to tell us why you wear that crape scarf on your arm."

Red Angus started, and a fierce gleam shot athwart his fiery eyes and darkening face.

A murmur of dissent among those near us, warned me that I had broached an unfortunate subject, which some of them knew.

"Pardon my thoughtlessness, Angus," said I, grasping his hand; "if I have probed an old wound, or awakened a bitter memory, by my soul it was done unwittingly."

"You have probed an old and a deep wound, Philip, and referred to a badge which I never can behold without bitterness and regret. Had you come from among the clans in the west, instead of from those of the north, you had known the story. Kildon, McColl, Sir Donald the chief, all knew it, and might a hundred times have told it; but they respected the sorrow and shame of their comrade—said I shame? Nay, there is in it none to me; then why should I refrain from relating what I have so little reason to conceal."

Captain M'Alpine filled twice his quaigh with wine, and twice he drained it, with the air of a man who requires false courage to tell his story, and after twirling his long mustaches, began thus in his native and forcible Gaëlic:—

"Though I am descended from that portion of the Siol nan-Alpin which inhabit the frontier of the Highlands, forming one of the greatest barriers against the aggressive spirit of the Lowlander, an ancestor of mine, who had fought under Angus of the Isles, at the great sea battle of the Battle Bay, in Mull, obtained the isle of Gometra as a free gift from the Lord of the Ebudæ. There my people dwelt for several generations, and, without going back to the days of Fergus the son of Erc, that is enough to give one consequence in the west.

"The isle was poor and barren, for it lies between the tremendous mountains of Mull and the basaltic cliffs of Staffa, and is separated from the dark blue terraces of Ulva by a narrow strip of ocean. My father's people never took the field unless than a hundred claymores and forty bowmen; they were poor, but honest, brave, and industrious, clothing and feeding

themselves by the fruits of their labour—by the loom and the forge, the breeding of sheep, cattle, and horses, and the manufacture of kelp.

“We held our lands of a M’Lean—Hector of Lochdon,” added Angus, grinding his teeth; “he dwelt in a castle which had towers and gates; brass cannon and iron bombardes; we occupied a little mansion by the Sound of Ulva. By our tenure, we were required to have always a war-galley in the Sound, but M’Lean had never less than twelve; five hundred brass targets hung in his hall, and a thousand claymores; yet we cocked our bonnets as high as he did; and, unless when under his banner, would never yield an inch to him, at kirk or market—at hunting or hosting.

“To our family was entrusted the education of the successive heirs of Lochdon. We taught them the use of arms, the sword, the oar, the harp, and the bow; with every accomplishment becoming a duinewassal. All these, four successive generations had acquired at our little dwelling on the Sound of Ulva. I was twenty when my father died—”

“With an arrow in his throat,” said M’Coll.

“Ay—shot in a quarrel with the M’Donalds; but he bequeathed to me, as a sacred trust, the chieftain’s motherless son, M’Garadh, then in his sixth year, a noble and beautiful boy.

“To enable me to fulfil my charge with honour, and in obedience to my father’s special wish, as well as my own, I married the daughter of a kinsman, a brave and honourable gentleman of the isles, whose name I need not sully anew, by linking it with mine in this bitter revival of the past.

“Una, for she bore that fine old Highland name, was beautiful, and every harper between Isla and the Lewis sung of her beauty, and composed songs in her honour. These songs cost her father (for the old man doted on her) not less than a hundred brooches, silver quaighs, and carved dirk-handles; for no cunning harper of the Hebrides strung his harp to Una’s praise in vain.

“Una was graceful and tall among the maids of the Isles; the proportion of her form was so perfect, that her height could only be distinguished when she stood among others. Her hair was

dark and luxuriant; parted over her forehead, and bound by a fillet of gold, it fell in silky waves upon her shoulders. Her eyes were dark and dangerously beautiful; they were like two stars; her cheek had a transparent olive tint, for her mother had a tinge of the Douglas' blood in her. Her eyes were as if a pencil had traced them, and her nose had that aquiline arch which is ever indicative of pride. When calm and thoughtful, she might have passed for the *Malvina* of *Ossian*, or the Goddess of the Parthenon; when smiling, for the Goddess of Love herself. I was proud of my beautiful bride, and I loved her for her gentleness, for the memory of the battles her forefathers had won, and for the lustre which their name, with all her charms and virtues, would cast around my island home.

“ *Una*, alas! had no heart. Her bosom was high and spotless as the new-fallen snow; but it swelled only at the emotions of vanity.

“ *M'Lean* visited us often; and when his great gilded birlinn, with his banner waving, the pipers playing in the prow, the oarsmen chanting as they bent to the wave, the axes of his *Leine Chrios* sparkling in the sun, swept down the Sound of *Ulva*, she more than once stung me to the soul by drawing a cold comparison between his state and mine.

“ *Una* was not content. I redoubled my efforts to procure luxuries for her, and exacted a heavy kain from my poor tenants, that I might barter with the English traders for silks and velvets, and with the Norwegians for fine furs and broad-cloths; the finest gloves from *Perth*, the finest laces from *Glasgow*, the fairest pearls from *Cluny*, the most sparkling stones from *Cairngorm*—our Scottish jaspers, topazes, and amethysts—were procured for her. I parted with my father's Spanish gun (which he received from *Dunvegan*, when he destroyed the *Florida*, the great Spanish treasure-ship)—I parted with my best coat of harness—my polished lurich, with all its rings of steel—to procure for her ornaments and passemants, such trumpery and trash as had not been seen in the Isles since the days of *Alexander the Great Steward*.

“ We had visited our chief; the splendour and luxuries of his mansion dwelt long in her mind, and my exertions were unavailing.

“ Yet I redoubled my efforts and exchanged my wild ponies and short-legged cattle for the luxuries brought to the Clyde by the merchants of Bordeaux and the Flemings of the Dam. M’Lean came often to visit us—and always when I chanced to be absent, hunting in Mull, or in my birlinn on the Sound, looking after my fishermen.

“ I saw little to suspect; but I dreaded much, and thought more. Una was often pensive, cold, and irritable. Then a pain gnawed my heart, and a whisper that seemed to come from hell ascended to my ear. I was jealous—jealous of this bright being, whom I loved with my whole heart: for I could perceive that, though she sometimes smiled on me, her smile was ever brightest when the birlinn of M’Lean was seen upon the Sound, sweeping down between the isles, with banner flaunting, and oars, shields, and axes flashing in the sun.

“ ‘ Una !’ said I, one day, making a terrible effort to suppress my rising passion; ‘ you look after M’Lean as if you had never seen him before.’

“ ‘ Ah !’ said she with a smile, ‘ I know that a Highland matron should only have eyes for her husband—for the man she loves. Surely, dear Angus, you are not jealous of me ?’

“ ‘ No, Una—true love has no jealousy.’ (I knew that I spoke false.)

“ ‘ It has—it must—just to infuse a little life into it !’

“ Then she playfully kissed my cheek, saying—

“ ‘ Now, Angus, I would never suspect *you*, though I have heard that dark men are more constant than fair.’

“ ‘ And fair women more constant than dark.’

“ ‘ Oh, fie ! to say so, dear Angus Roy, after my pretty compliment.’

“ My heart leaped within me; methought I was a wretch to suspect her; and, taking my gun, I climbed the western cliffs of the isle in quest of a great golden eagle, which had then built an eyry there, and the yellow pinions of which I resolved to bring Una, though at the risk of my neck.

“ It was *Di Donich*, or St. Duncan’s day, as we call the Sabbath in the west, from some great missionary of the olden time; and I remember it well, as if every hour of it had passed

but yesterday. I was long away ; when, descending towards my house on the beach, I heard the sound of pipes and the song of the rowers. A turn of the rocks brought me in view of the azure Sound, then tinged red with the flush of a western sun ; the bannered barge of M'Lean was speeding across as fast as the broad flashing blades of twenty oars could carry it. M'Lean was at the stern, and a lady sat beside him. Anxiety and fear must have sharpened my vision ; for, even at the vast distance between us, I could recognise the dark hair of Una, bound by its fillet of gold, and, among the green tartans of the M'Leans, her scarlet plaid, with its bridal brooch, that shone like a star. That brooch I had placed upon her shoulder at the altar. It was indeed my wife ; she had left me ! I was alone upon the rock—and the fury of a demon swelled up within me.

“ I levelled my gun at Una, but my heart failed me ; then I pointed it at M'Lean, but withdrew it from my shoulder ; for the distance was too great. I sat down on the hillside and wept like a deserted child. Long I lingered there ; the daylight faded from the ocean, and its tints of gold and blue deepened into black ; the moon rose, and waned again ; the shadows of night melted into the light of day—but, alas ! I was still sitting there. The sun came out of the waters, and his rays shed a roseate tint on Ulva's brows of rock, and the loftier peaks of Mull ; while that beautiful island, with its deep inlets, its rock-built castles, and grey old Scandinavian burghs, raised by the long-haired warriors of Ivar and Acho, were before me ; but I saw only one spot in all that line of coast. It was the tall grim tower of M'Lean.

“ Upon the solitary shore, with no eye upon me but the blessed one of God, with my knees on the sand, and the dirk on my lips—the Holy Iron—I swore by the black stones of Iona, by the grey rock of M'Gregor, by the four blessed Gospels, and by my own soul, a terrible vow, to revenge myself upon M'Lean, and to make his hand the means of punishing Una. I remembered the proverb—that deeds are men, and words are women ; but I was resolved that *my deeds* should make me little less than a fiend.

“ My people met me with shame, with anger, and with silent

'sorrow; there were some who showed the wounds they had received from the Leine Chrios of M'Lean, for they had manfully resisted the departure of my wife, and blows had been given and arrows shot before that abduction—to which she consented with a willingness she was at no pains to conceal—had been effected. A savage thought seized me.

"By the soul of Mary! I have still a hostage!" said I; "where is M'Garadh—the cub of yonder wolf?"

"The M'Leans were too wary to trust the child among us after the deed of yesterday, and he is away with his father in the birlinn."

"I gnashed my teeth with rage, for I knew that M'Lean loved the boy—the hope of his house—even as his own life, and more. But why protract this story? among you, there are many who know it but too well. It has an echo yet in Mull; for there my vengeance gave a name to a mountain which, as yet, had been unnamed since Time began.

"I was too true a son of Alpin to take unwary measures. I bided my time for revenge, and the time came, though slowly; for the passing fishermen of Aros, the traffickers of Tobermory, and the pilgrims who came to drink of St. Mary's well (from which that clachan took its name), told me how Una had lost all sense of shame and honour; and, to the eternal disgrace of her father's name and mine, was living with M'Lean, even as Fair Helen lived with Paris. Her aged father sent a duine-wassal, proposing to lend me four hundred swordsmen, three brass cannon, and ninety archers, if I wished to assail M'Lean under his roof-tree; but I declined, for the men of Mull were too many for us, and I brooded over a deeper revenge.

"M'Lean proclaimed a great hunting-match, and it took place on St. Duncan's day—exactly one year after Una had left me. All the men of Mull were there; M'Coll of that Ilk, the M'Donalds of Aros, the M'Leans of Duairt and those of Lochbuie. As a poor fisherman from Lochlinnhe, disguised in bonnet, kilt, and plaid of undyed wool, with a long beard, and a face so pale and wan, that not even Una would have known me, I mingled with the hunters. For three days the sport continued, and one great stag—the prince of the island—after escaping many a spear, bullet, and arrow—after flinging the

strongest of the grey dogs aloft on its branching antlers—and after swimming Loch Uisc and Loch Ba, was slain by my foe at the foot of a great hill which overlooks a narrow valley, above which it rises on pillars of basalt, two hundred feet in height. He laid the horns at the feet of Una, who, regardless of the darkened brows, averted faces, and muttered reprobations of the Highland chieftains, was queen of the chase, and presided at the feast on the greensward, where a thousand men sat down to banquet on the fruits of their prowess, while the war-pipe and harp, the uisquebaugh, the ale of the Lowland bodachs, and the wine of the Frenchman and Spaniard, made the merriment ring between the mountain peaks.

“I alone was sad. A snake was in my breast. Una sat beside M’Lean, and with painful acuteness my eye saw every movement of both. When their hands touched, or their eyes met, my heart seemed to burn, and my pulses beat like lightning. I knew that there was a glare in my eye, and a terrible expression in my face, that would discover me, and reveal the wild thoughts of murder and assassination that were rising in my heart; and yet my Una was so beautiful, her smile was so full of fascination, and her deportment so full of unstudied grace, that, though I might loathe, I could not wonder at M’Lean for loving her, and robbing me of a being so adorable. But Hector of Lochdon, with all his barbarous magnificence, could never love as I—her husband—loved her.

“His son, the little boy M’Garadh, recognised me through all my disguise, my agony of visage, and outward change; and, creeping to my side, he clambered into my arms. As if he had been my own, I loved this child; but now I felt something strange fluttering about my heart, and with a pang that hovered between the throb of pleasure and the thrill of rage, I clasped the boy to my breast; and then, holding him aloft in one hand and my naked dirk in the other, I sprang with a wild shout from the sward where the hunters were carousing, and rushed up the side of the mountain.

“‘Tis M’Alpine!’ cried a hundred voices; ‘tis Red Angus of Gometra!’ I soon reached a shelf of overhanging rock, some ninety feet above the hunting-party, and there I paused.

“‘M’Lean—Hector of Lochdon !’ I cried with a wild voice, and the aspect of a madman, for I felt there was madness in my brain, and the emotions of a devil in my heart; ‘from the summit of this rock I will dash your son to its foot, if you slay not the infamous woman who sits beside you !’

“‘Shoot—shoot !’ he exclaimed; ‘to your bows and handguns ! Aid me, M’Coll—Aros—Duart, and Lochbuy !’ But these chiefs looked darkly on, and made no response.

“‘Dost thou pause, villain ?’ I cried again; ‘then hear me.—I swear by the four blessed gospels of God, by the Holy Iron, and by the grave of Alpin, that I will dash this screaming child brainless at your feet, if you do not—this instant—and with your own hand, slay the wretch who sits beside you !’ I swung the fair-haired child above my head, and his cries came faintly downward to his father’s ear. Then could I feast my eyes upon that father’s agony; as trembling in every limb, with sword unsheathed, he gazed alternately upward at me and downward at his pallid and voiceless paramour, who bowed her beautiful head like a lily to the blast, and had bared her white bosom to the impending steel; for well she knew that M’Lean loved his boy, the hope of his house, better than her—the tool of guilty pleasure, the plaything of an hour.

“‘Red Angus !’ cried M’Lean, in a choking voice; ‘I will restore your wife, and with her yield a thousand head of cattle, a hundred targets of brass, and as many Spanish guns; I will yield you the best farm I possess, with the salmon-fishings of Lochdon, to thee and thine for ever, freely and irredeemably, but spare my boy !’

“‘Wretch !’ I replied; and once more swung the unhappy child aloft; ‘if thou and all thy posterity yielded to me their possessions on earth and their share of paradise, I would not spare thy whelp, nor will I now if thou sparest her who sits beside thee ! Once !’

“‘Shoot—shoot !’ he cried to his Leine Chrios.

“Thirty archers bent their bows and drew their arrows to the ear, but relinquished them; thirty long-barrelled guns were levelled at me, but were lowered again, for the gillies feared to shoot the boy.

“Dost thou hear me?—*twice!*” I cried, swinging the child again, for I was mad, but had no intention of throwing the boy, *alone* at least. I intended to spring down with him, that we might perish together.

“Trembling with terror for the safety of his child, and urged by the fierce persuasions of his Leine Chrios, who considered the life of the heir of more value than the lives of a hundred adulterous women, M’Lean ran his sword into the heart of Una! She bent over the blade and died at his feet.

“From the edge of that frightful precipice I saw the white bosom of my wife, and the blood (red as the checks of her tartan plaid) that dyed her yellow kirtle. Then the light left my eyes, the strength of my hands relaxed, and the boy fell from them into the valley below. From that abyss I heard a terrible cry ascend to the summit of the basaltic columns; there was a confused discharge of fire-arms; bullets and arrows whistled about me; I reeled like a drunken man, a swoon came over me, and I remember no more.

“The poor child had been killed. In my madness and helplessness I destroyed him; and, to this hour, the men of Mull call that rocky hill which had no name before, *Ben Garadh*.^{*}

“Why prolong a tale so painful? Grey dawn was stealing along the narrow Sound and tumbling sea; and morning was reddening the summits of the hills when I awoke, or recovered, to find myself in silence, with honest M’Coll of that Ilk (who now commands our pikes), standing by me, while his men were in the valley below. All the other huntsmen had departed, and taken with them the bodies of the dead. He had protected me at the risk of his life; for our fathers had fought side by side in the same galley, at the battle of the Bloody Bay.

“‘You must fly, Angus,’ said he; ‘for all the Isles cannot afford you long a hiding-place, and the Lowlanders will not receive you.’

“I knew the truth of this, and had no wish to remain, where every thing was hateful to me. I was outlawed by the Lord Justice-General of Scotland; I was proclaimed a fugitive by the High Court of Justiciary, and my lands were given to the

* The Hill of Garadh. This is still a tradition of the Isle of Mull.

Campbells (of course), for every thing in the west that is in want of an owner belongs to *them*. I hid me long in M'Kinnon's cave, and other recesses of the isle, until an opportunity occurred of leaving the place, and joining old Sir Andrew Gray, whose Scottish bands were sailing for Bohemia. The memory of that *Di Donich* will never die but with myself; and in token of the sorrow, the bitterness, and remorse I have endured, for the barbarity of my revenge, and the unwitting death of the poor child I loved, I have worn this *scarf of crape*, and on many a field and in many a breach, since the battle of the White Mountain, where the walls of Prague rang to the slogan of the Scottish musketeers, down to the battle of Semigallia, when, under the gallant Gustavus, we cut the Poles to pieces, I have worn this mark of mourning. Now, gentlemen and brother soldiers," continued Angus, heaving a deep sigh as he filled his quaigh from Kildon's brandy bottle, "you have heard my story; pray tell me if ever—ha! what is that?"

A pistol-shot, followed by the low faint cry of a woman, came towards us on the night wind. Every man looked in his comrade's face, and listened.

The cry, with the impression made upon me by M'Alpine's horrid story, brought a deadly chill over my heart; but I unsheathed my claymore, exclaiming—

"To your arms, and follow me!"

The whole party snatched up their muskets, and rushed through the thicket, in the direction from whence the cry seemed to come.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE PISTOL-SHOT.

A FEW pages back, we left Bandolo the scout, and Bernhard his fellow-ruffian, confronting each other 'with knife and pistol, not sixty yards from where we were quietly seated on the grass, listening intently to the story of Angus Roy M'Alpine. Bernhard's heart was swollen with rage, but fear of Bandolo repressed it; for he knew all that personage was capable of; and, moreover, that he would require at least one-half of the expected reward for the only good act the woodman had ever performed—yea, since he left his cradle in infancy.

"For this girl you are to get about the value of eight hundred ducats?"

"Yes," growled Bernhard. Bandolo laughed, and replied—

"I dare say Merodé would give another thousand to have her back again; but that is a slender chance. We shall then have four hundred ducats each—is it not so camarado?"

"No—it is not so," said Bernhard, hoarsely; "you have no right to dictate to me in this matter. I never marred your little plots or speculations; leave mine to the event of fortune. Now stand aside, or by—"

"Ha—ha—ha!" laughed Bandolo, standing right in the centre of the narrow path, while Gabrielle clung to a tree, for terror had quite unnerved her.

"Schelm!" growled Bernhard, "do you know that a party of Christians, Scottish musketeers, are within pistol-shot?"

"Yes; and that, by firing one of these, I could at the same moment summon them, and blow out your brains, which I shall assuredly do if you utter a cry or sound."

Inflamed by sudden fury, Bernhard made a spring at Bandolo, knife in hand; but he was hurled back like a boy by the more

powerful ruffian; and one touch of the cold pistol barrel against his face, was sufficient to curb the emotion that sprang from avarice.

"Then you will not divide with me?"

"No—I will rather see you in the lowest pit of ——."

"Time enough, Bernhard, my camarado; we may see each other there yet. But why do I chaffer here, and what are four hundred despicable ducats to the sum I lost in that cottage near Eckernfjord?"

At this recollection a gleam seemed to shoot athwart the savage eyes of Bandolo; his livid face became convulsed by the emotions of an enraged and ferocious heart; and he spoke in broken sentences.

"Hear me, camarado, I have to punish thee for robbing me of a thousand ducats——"

"I swear that Merodé never gave them to me!"

"Silence! I have to punish Ernestine, the count's daughter, for robbing me of my hard won gold and treasury bills, and for leaving me like a fool, drugged, senseless, and snorting, for two days in Frau Krümple's hut; I have to punish Carlstein, for riding over me like a dog in the streets of Vienna, without a word of pity, because he knew me to be Bandolo. (Ha! did not that name bring one thought of terror to his haughty heart?) I have to punish the Scottish Captain Rollo, for wounding, discovering, and disarming me—for insulting me, and crossing my purposes, and marring my profits on a hundred occasions; last of all, I am not to be outwitted by a mere animal like thee; and thus I rob thee of thy ducats, and avenge myself like Bandolo the Spaniard—like the man I have always been!"

He levelled a pistol at Gabrielle, but it flashed in the pan; and that flash showed her a face that froze her very blood; for the pallid and distorted visage of the Spaniard, with his inflated nostrils, and sharp jackal-like teeth, made him resemble a fiend—a vampire—any thing but a man. Yet she sprang forward, and said in a piercing voice, while clasping her trembling hands, and bending upon him a timid and imploring smile—a smile that would have fascinated the most ascetic saint, and softened even the heart of a Nero—

"Ah, Spaniard, you cannot have the heart to kill *me!* I never did you wrong."

Bandolo laughed like a hyena, and cocked his second pistol; then she uttered a wild cry, and hung upon his arm, saying—

"Spare me—spare me! Do not kill me—I am too young to die—I must see my sister—do not kill me—none shall know—none shall hear! Spare me, and you will be rewarded—my father—my sister——"

The bright flash of the pistol was followed by a dull, but terrible sound; the barbarian had shot her dead, and she fell quivering at his feet.

Unfortunate Gabrielle!

"Now go to Hesinge—to the Schottlanders—and get your eight hundred ducats, or so much as this carrion is worth!" said Bandolo, as he sprang through the thicket, and vanished.

Fear, the first impulse of the guilty and the vile, impelled Bernhard also to fly, and it was not until the next day at noon that he presented himself among us at Hesinge, and explained circumstantially the particulars of a deed of barbarity so wanton, that I believe it has few parallels in the annals of crime.

Rushing from our bivouac, with sword drawn and musket cocked, we scattered through the wood, seeking for the source of the cry and the shot we had heard. Soldiers' eyes are accustomed to scan and recognise objects even in the gloomiest night; thus Angus Roy first found Gabrielle, and like the sound of a trumpet his Highland hollo drew us all to the spot.

I shall never forget my emotion on beholding the poor girl's body, stretched at full length on the grass, and quite dead, but still warm, though the blood was flowing profusely from a terrible wound under the right ear; for through there the ball had passed, departing by the back part of the head. She must have died on the instant.

The blood soon ceased to ooze; her jaw fell, and her once merry blue eye became glazed and dim. Ernestine was now my sole thought. I anticipated all she would suffer; and my sympathies for the once happy and childlike being who was gone, were mingled with pity for the survivor. I knew that she would, indeed, be lonely now!

It was a dreary place where Gabrielle lay, and, bedabbled in blood, her bright golden hair was spread among the rank, luxuriant grass.

With something akin to terror, I contemplated our return to Hesinge, and for a time felt completely bewildered. Our sternest clansmen all shared my emotions, though of course in a less degree; and while Phadrig Mhor and two others remained by my side, Angus M'Alpine with the rest, scoured the whole vicinity, without meeting a single person whom they could in any way implicate in the terrible catastrophe of the night.

"Be patient, sir," said Phadrig Mhor, seeing how deeply I was moved; "be patient—for this is the dispensation of God."

"From his blessed hand there never came a blow so cruel!" I replied bitterly. "O for the power of magic to discover, to reach, to punish, the author of this dire calamity!"

"Let us make the poor corpse look as comely as possible," said Phadrig, "lest we needlessly shock the poor lady at Hesinge."

"Comely!" said I.

"By washing the gore from her beautiful hair—oichone! and her neck, poor innocent!" A big tear trembled on the sturdy sergeant's eye-lashes. "She often spoke very kindly to me, sir," he added.

"I thank you, Phadrig, for the gentle and delicate thought," said I; "get me some water."

The honest fellow ran to an adjacent runnel, and brought me some water in his bonnet. I knelt down, and tore my white silk scarf (we all wore Scottish scarfs), and bathed the face, neck, and hair of Gabrielle. I closed her eyes, and arranged her luxuriant tresses about her head, so as to conceal that terrible wound from whence her pure spirit had gone to happier regions. I dropped more than one hot tear upon her pallid face, as I kissed her cold lips with all the affection of a brother, and spread my tartan plaid over her.

It would have been a fine subject for a picture—that poor girl's body lying lifeless on the ground, and the grim group of kilted soldiers standing gravely and sadly around it, leaning on their muskets; and some there were, whose eyes, though dimmed by

honest emotion, had looked on many a battle-field—stout fellows who would march to the cannon's mouth; but were now recalling those prayers for the dead, which their Highland mothems had taught them in other times, when James of Jerusalem and Father Ignatius had preached to the Catholic clans.

When all our party had returned, a bier was formed by stretching my plaid between two sergeants' halberts, and thus the remains of Gabrielle were borne by Phadrig Mhor and Gillian M'Bane towards our cantonments.

All who, like myself, have marched between Helnœsland and Hesinge, must have remarked a little roadside tavern near the head of the bay.

There we first carried the body, and after procuring a more suitable bier, set out on our mournful journey for Hesinge.

How can I describe the grief of Ernestine!

* * * * *

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE MIDNIGHT FUNERAL.

ERNESTINE had been watching our approach from a window. It was some time before she recovered from the stupefaction into which the appearance of the body of Gabrielle, and the relation of our terrible narrative (which then wanted the unity that after inquiries have enabled me to give it), had plunged her. As yet one of the principal actors had not come forward; thus, the cause of Gabrielle's death was involved in a mystery, alike perplexing and impenetrable.

"All is over now," said Ernestine; "all is over now! My father—my father—let me reach my father's side, and then die too!"

Grief affected her by alternate fits of bitterness and calmness. At one time she was somewhat composed in her woe; at others, she flung herself upon her knees beside the bed on which the body lay (the same bed whereon her sister's slayer so nearly assassinated herself), and fondly kissed her again and again, playing with the masses of golden-coloured hair, that streamed over the pillow, with the pretty but pallid fingers that still yielded to her touch—arranging, and re-arranging her dress, uttering the while many a piteous endearing epithet, with many of those pious and beautiful exclamations of hope and woe, which the prayers of her Catholic preceptor had taught her.

"It is my own Gabrielle come back to me, after all! God has sent her to me, that once more I might take a sister's fond farewell of her. But God has been very cruel to me! Oh! what do I say? No, no—he has taken you to himself—you are now among the angels in heaven, sister; you were too good for this bad world! You are happy, and I must not grudge you to Him, who will one day require me too."

"She will know how kind you are to her," said Phadrig Mhor, who, being a Catholic, had earnestly begged leave to say his prayers at the foot of the bed, where he knelt down, and behind his bonnet was making very wry faces to conceal his sorrow, for grief easily affects the hearts of the brave and honest; "she will indeed, lady, for the dead know all that passes here."

There is something sacred in grief. We all withdrew, and at her own request left Ernestine along with the body for a time.

With a delicacy of sentiment that charmed me, she would not allow either the hostess of the inn, or any other woman, to assist her in arranging the remains of the poor child (for in many things Gabrielle was but a child) for the grave. She knew whose hands Gabrielle would have preferred to perform this sad and solemn, this last duty of affection; and thus unaided, she lifted and laid her in the coffin, tying her consecrated medals round her neck, laying a chaplet of white roses on her brow, and a crucifix upon her breast; she concluded, by repeatedly reading aloud, with a broken voice, those prayers which the church, in whose tenets she had been reared, directed shall be said for the dead.

These little offices, the pleasing dictates of mingled affection and religion, soothed and occupied her mind; and I could not help thinking how much the ideas inculcated by the ancient faith (whether derived from paganism or not), were calculated to rob the grim tyrant of his terrors, rather, than like our Scottish customs, to invest him with others more appalling.

I beheld her with admiration, and her faith and fervour stirred a thousand deep and pious thoughts within me. The memory of those two days at Hesinge is full of pain; for we spent one day more, Ian delaying his march, in consequence of this melancholy catastrophe, over which I mean to hurry as briefly as possible.

It appeared at times impossible to *realise* the conviction, that our poor Gabrielle had passed away, or now existed only in memory!

During nearly an entire day I sat with Ernestine beside the body, which was to be buried at midnight in the old village church close by. As the dusk of evening stole on, strange

alternations of light and shadow fell on the beautiful face of the dead girl, giving it at times a most lifelike expression. Then it would seem as if the features moved, and, but for her awful placidity, I could have imagined that, in her old spirit of wagging, the pretty Gabrielle was mocking us all. Though my brother-soldiers mourned for the untimely end of the poor young girl, I thought they should all love her as much as I did; for sorrow is sometimes unreasonable; and the easy indifference with which they continued their military duties, made me indignant at them all. But they felt like soldiers. Their first impulse was to have Merodé punished, and after considerable disputation among the officers as to who should have the honour of effecting this, unknown to me lots were cast in Ian's helmet under the *Green-Tree*, and it fell to the stout old Laird of Kildon to challenge Merodé to advance one hundred paces from the gate of Helnœsland, and, after exchanging four pistol-shots on foot or horseback, to decide the contest by the sword; but the necessity for immediately marching by daybreak, prevented this desirable rencontre from taking place. Had it been, sure am I that the white-haired Mackenzie had cut the German count into pieces.

The whole regiment attended the funeral, which the rank of Gabrielle required should take place at midnight.

It was a strange and striking scene! The coffin of that young being, once so happy and so full of life, with a chaplet of white lilies on its lid, borne on the shoulders of four tall Highland soldiers, preceded by the village girls in white, and old Torquil Gorm, with his pipes, pouring to the still midnight a slow and subdued lament; our bronzed and scarred officers in their picturesque arms and garb following close behind, with the veiled form of Ernestine in the midst;—all this was seen, be it remembered, by the lurid and uncertain light of twenty torches carried by Highland soldiers.

The night air was soft and mild; no moon was visible, but occasional red stars shot across the sky, and the pale northern lights were gleaming at the far and flat horizon. The leaves of the old yew-trees, the grass of the graves, and the flowers that bordered the churchyard path, were gleaming in dew; and the grotesque architecture of the massive and ancient porch, the low-

browed arches of every window and aisle were bathed in red and wavering light, or rounded into deep and gloomy shadow, as the funeral train swept slowly down the centre of the church, preceded by a minister of the Lutheran faith, a venerable Dane, clad in a white surplice and embroidered stole, with a large brass-bound Bible in his hand. He was an aged and silver-haired man, whose thin wan *haffets* glittered in the light of the uplifted torches. There was no sound but the sputtering of the latter, and the sobs of Ernestine, who leant upon my arm.

The coffin, which was placed upon a bier above the grave, emitted a hollow sound as it was deposited. Then I felt Ernestine tremble. That faint but terrible sound vibrated among the chords of her desolate heart.

I remember still the words of the burial-service, the solemn and beautiful prayer for the innocent dead; but the memory of that midnight funeral floats before me wavering and indistinctly, like a half-forgotten but impressive dream. The yawning grave and the descending coffin; the sputtering torches and the green tartans; the glittering cuirasses and sunburnt faces of my comrades; the grey and grotesque columns of the old Danish church; the veiled figure that knelt in a paroxysm of prayer and grief beside the closing tomb, from which she would be far away to-morrow; the kind and solemn face of the old village pastor, as he covered it with his sleeve, bowed his aged head, and closed his book; the jarring sound of hasty shovels; the deposition of a large stone; the quiet and slow departure of the many; the lingering of the few, who seemed loth to leave the sobbing and sorrowing sister. The torches by that time were extinguished, and all was over.

All seemed to be a fantasy—a thing that could not be; and the idea that haunted me was, that Gabrielle *should* meet us at our return. But, alas! there was nothing in the little chamber to indicate her former presence but the outline of her coffin, which still was impressed upon the bed; and, on seeing that, poor Ernestine fainted.

As her elder kinsman, Ian had held the principal cord of the coffin; thus it was by the hand she loved best that the head of poor Gabrielle was lowered into her early grave.

Book the Twelfth.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HELSINGÖR.

IT was a relief to us all when day dawned, for the great event of the night had sorely damped our spirit. The funeral was not over before an early hour; Fritz, Ian, M'Alpine, and I, sat under the *Green-Tree*, drinking hot sack by the light of a stable lantern, and when day dawned in the east, and the clouds of night rolled away over Juteland and the Belt, we gladly prepared to march. With the first peep of day our pipers blew the "gathering," and the regiment fell in by companies, in the main street. Munro of Culcraigie had marched with the baggage-wains an hour before.

Ernestine was in Karl's carriage, and was accompanied by her female attendants, while our preacher, doctor, fourrier, and such other gentlemen as had no place under baton, rode by the side of the wheels. Just as the sun rose above the horizon, we marched from Hesinge, with the shrill fifes playing and merry drums rattling to the old air, *Put up your dagger, Jamie.** Thus with all the glitter of military display, and its greatest accessory, martial music, we left for ever that old Danish village of Odenzee, and its melancholy associations.

Next day we reached Nyeborg, a town strongly fortified, but falling into ruin; the old castle of four towers, which Christian III. enclosed by bastions of earth, was untiled, and hastening to decay. From thence we crossed the Great Belt, which was rough and stormy, and landed at Korsör, a poor-looking town, having an ancient fortress. From thence we continued our route towards

* Now known as "My love she's but a lassie yet."

Elsineur (or Helsingör), where we arrived after an easy march of five days, during which there occurred nothing of any consequence save an occasional quarrel with the boors.

On the route I had many opportunities of paying to Ernestine all those little attentions which gallantry inculcates, and affection inspires. The constant change of scene, for each night we halted in a different town, kept her mind employed, and drew her away from her own sorrows; but still they would recur, again and again, with greater force, because she had permitted herself to be for a time comparatively placid.

The only scene in Zealand that elicited an observation from her was the royal forest of Sora, and its pretty town, which stood on the margin of a deep dark lake, dotted by snow-white swans. We approached it by a bank, which was laid across a marsh and formed a roadway, bordered on each side by trees, and terminated by a gate.

If some of my brother officers had not acquainted Major Fritz of the tenor of my intimacy with Ernestine, no doubt the condolences and attentions he would have bestowed on a girl so attractive, would have been overpowering and intrusive; but though the gallant musketeer of Sleswig was enchanted by her beauty, he was compelled to keep his vivacity and admiration within the narrow bounds allotted by the most frigid politeness; for I believe he knew that I was one whose temper would not brook much trifling. Still he could not restrain his propensity to jest, and was wont to say at times, when we were smoking a pipe together on the march, or sipping a can of wine at a halt—

“Ah—oh!—I see how it is, devilish well; one does not require the eyes of Argus for that.”

“For what, Herr Major?”

“That we shall not be long in cantonments before you will commit something in the way of matrimony; though a wife is a deuced incumbrance to a soldier of fortune. In fact, long before we fight our way to Vienna, I expect to see you the delighted father of a little brood of bare-legged Scots, subsiding down into a staid old fellow, and a pattern of all the domestic virtues.”

“In these I shall never be rivalled by *you*, Fritz.”

“Der Teufel, no! If I have my pipe and my horse, my sword and a few dollars in my purse, a friend to chat to and an occasional pretty girl to toy with, the world, and all the domestic virtues to boot, may go and be hanged for aught that I would care.”

Three miles from Elsineur the brave old King of Denmark came on horseback to meet us, accompanied by his Live Knecht, the Count of Rantzäü, the Barons of Klosterfiörd, Föyce, and other knights of the Armed Hand. This stout monarch, who was still as keen an admirer of beauty as when a stripling of eighteen, first paid his respects to Ernestine, and, alighting from horseback, stood hat in hand at the door of the caleche. Unaware of all that had happened, he asked where her “pretty sister was.”

Then Ernestine could no longer restrain her tears, and told her sorrowful story.

King Christian’s solitary eye, glistened at her narrative. He kissed her hand, and then patted her on the head, as a father would have done; for though a king, and one as brave as ever wore a crown, or drew a sword, he was a good old soul.

“Poor child!” said he; “my heart bleeds for you, but, if possible, forget the past in contemplating the future. We cannot alter it; even the great Master of heaven and earth himself, with all his power and majesty, though he may avert the evils or change the events of the future, cannot control the past. It is unalterable.”

From a hill above Elsineur the view was lively, beautiful, and even impressive. On one side lay the flat and low, but green promontory, grasping the narrow gate of the Baltic, with its white town spreading irregularly along the slope, and overlooked by the square and massive castle of Cronborg, in the vaults of which, the legends say, old Holgier Danske and his long bearded *Knechts* have been seated round a stone table for centuries; and there the fat and well-fed Danish soldiers hear the occasional clash of their axes and hauberks, during the still, dark hours of their midnight guard.

Away on the west stretched the level shore of Denmark, with little tufts of coppice and gentle hills of sand, rising from immense

plains, where wind-mills were tossing their light arms on the breeze. On the east, rough Sweden reared its mighty mountains and tremendous rocks, which the earthquakes and thunderbolts of an antediluvian world had cleft and rent into steep summits, starting boldly and bluffly forward from a sky of blue, and tinted with the rosy light of a setting sun; between these peaks, and beyond them, lay its deep dark vales and old primeval woods, its vast lakes and foaming rivers; its scenery stern and magnificent, like that of our mother Caledonia.

The setting sun was gilding the copper roofs of the four large turrets or corner towers of Cronborg, and throwing their shadows far upon the azure waters of the Sound, them dotted by the white sails of many a passing ship. I remember to have seen an original letter, written from this castle, by his Majesty James VI. to Alexander Lord Spynie, anent the erection of the bishopric of Moray into a temporal lordship.*

Five casemated bastions faced the landward, and one, mounted with cannons-royale, swept the narrow gate, where Christian IV. had again begun to levy an ocean toll upon the ships of all nations. Except those of the Scots, who were in alliance with Denmark, every vessel lowered her topsail, and showed her flag for five minutes, or a cannon-shot came booming upon her from Cronborg. This toll was originally exacted on account of certain buoys, by which the Danish government marked the dangerous shoals, and for certain lights burned upon the coast by night. Previous to 1582, England paid a rose-noble for every ship that passed the Sound, and her vessels lowered their topsails; but in consequence of the double marriages and ancient friendship between Denmark and Scotland, the ships of the latter nation passed the fort with St. Andrew's ensign flying and all their sails set.

At the gate of Helsingör, we were met by our colonel, Sir Donald Mackay, who with five hundred good recruits had arrived from Scotland three days previous. As we marched in, with pipes sounding, drums beating, and colours flying, these recruits mingled with our ranks, in search of friends and relations, brothers and kinsmen, and there arose a clamour of joyous congratulations, mingled with exclamations of sorrow, for many

* The letter referred to by Captain Rollo, is now among the Denmyne MSS.

a man who was missing, and whom the new-comers had hoped to see and to greet.

Some inquired for brothers and fathers, and were answered that they were lying in their graves at Bredenburg, the Boitze, at Eckernförd, or other places. These announcements cast a shadow over their obstreperous joy; while the news they brought us from Scotland were of the most varied description, and led us to believe, that ere long all our swords and our valour would be required to vindicate the rights and the dignity of Scotland against her native prince, and his meddling subjects of England.

Sir Donald handed me a letter from Dominie Daidle, who had prayed him, when passing through Cromartie, to deliver it to me, "if he found me in the body." It was written, as the Dominie said, by the express order of the laird, my father, who (poor man!) was no deacon at penmanship.

All were in good health at Craigrollo; all congratulated me on my promotion to the command of a company, and so forth. Even my father was beginning to take an interest in my success, and regretted my absence. "The muckle spune—" but here the Dominie had drawn his pen through the words, as if he had changed his mind, and went on with other information. My three brothers had recently had some hard work in recovering certain herds of our cattle, which had been borrowed, sans leave, by the caterans of the Black Isle. In this service, Finlay had received a slash from an axe, and Farquhar a dab from a biodag; but, thanks to Providence, and the salves of old Mhona Toshach, the poor lads were doing well. Then came all the news of the district. Urquhart of Cromartie had won his famous plea anent his niece's tocher before the Lords of Session; but as the lord justice-general was his kinsman, auld Sir Thomas was aye fortunate in *his* pleas. Dalblair had come down the burn-side with four-and-twenty Hielandmen, and burned the tower of his auld enemy, Camstrairy; but had been put to the horn, and was now fled from the kingdom to France or England. The laird of Brea had burned the clachan of St. Martin's, because Gilbert Blakhal, a seminary priest, had been hiding there, and so forth. Then came various messages to soldiers of the regiment. "Tell Alister Glas from Kessock, that his mother received the fifty

dollars that he sent; and that his father, puir bodach! mistook another man's kye for his own, and bade farewell to this world at Crieff, last Lammas-tide. Tell Rori Beg, from Brea, that his sister went off with the Egyptians to the Lowlands, and has not since been heard of; but the laird swears he will hang every man and mother's son of them that pass this way in future, for she was the bonniest lass on the barony. Tell Gillian M'Bane, that his brother, the sailor, has been seized and made a slave by the cruel pirates of Barbary, with twenty other mariners of the good ship *Bon Accord*, of Aberdeen, but we raised a subscription here to buy him off, and the laird has given twenty crowns Scots towards the gude work. Kynnoch, the provost of Forres, was burned yesterday as a warlock and traitor.

"There are doleful troubles brewing in the south," continued the dominie, "and a war with England is confidently looked for. Maist men wish it, for there are sic swarms o' idle callants biding about every hall and homestead—and war must come; for flying rumour saith, that our Scottish clergy have petitioned the king against the Five obnoxious Articles of Perth, and that he hath urged the Archbishop of St. Andrews to enforce the Episcopal order. The cloud gathers, and the storm groweth. A little while, and we shall see the one darken, and the other burst over the length and breadth of the land. Mark me, Master Philip, a day of dule is coming, when all those gallant Scots who are now fighting the battles of Denmark, Sweden, Bohemia, and Almainie, will be summoned home to protect (against the king and the aggressive English) that holy kirk which Knox and Wishart founded, and those institutions which our forefathers transmitted to us—even as we are bound to transmit them unimpaired to our posterity."

In fact, the acuteness of my old dominie enabled him to perceive those storms then darkening the horizon of Scottish politics, but which, to more superficial observers, were as yet invisible.

Since the death of Gabrielle, Ernestine had become more than ever impatient and anxious to rejoin her father, who (as the king informed her) was now at Stralsund, in command of a brigade of cavalry, and who probably supposed that all this time

his daughters had been safely at Falster with the old queen-dowager.

Stralsund was now in a desperate state, and no time was to be lost in hastening to its rescue. Thus, in one hour after we entered Elsineur, we embarked on board the fleet, and sailed for the beleaguered city.

Ernestine and her two attendants were the only females on board the king's ship, where, by the judicious management of my friend, the Baron Karl—then acting as quartermaster-general—I had the good fortune to be embarked with my company. For the first time since we left Hesinge, I perceived a smile on the face of Ernestine; this was when the vessels were got fairly under weigh, and, squaring their yards to the northern gale, stood down the Sound with all their sails set, just as the sun sank behind the spires of Elsineur.

"I am now fairly on my way to my father," said she.

"And to leave me?"

The smile died away, and she gave me a pleading glance.

She sat long beside me on the deck, wrapped up in a well-furred mantle, nor did she bid me adieu for the night until we were far past the isle of Hueen, the residence of Tycho Brahe (and then famous for four castles, said by the Danish legends to have been built by the children of Huenella the giantess), and had reached that part of the straits where they widen to twenty-five and thirty miles in breadth, and the distant spires of Landskrona faded from our view.

After she retired I paced the deck alone (being captain of the military watch), rolled in my plaid, and smoking a German pipe. I was thoughtful, and looked forward, with no pleasant anticipations, to our arrival at the great city of Stralsund; for there I would be separated from Ernestine for a long and indefinite period. Her father and I were the servants of hostile kings; and, though near kinsmen (but, as yet, the count knew not that), were the leaders of soldiers who were the enemies of each other; and all that I could hope for now, was to be favoured with bearing the flag of truce by which Ernestine would be finally guided to the Imperial tents.

Near me a number of our soldiers of the watch were telling

stories, and sat in a circle on the main deck, with their plaids and bonnets drawn over their ears. I drew near to listen, and thus wiled away the hours of the night.

Morning came again: another part of the coast and a wider sea were in view. The grey clouds which had veiled the sky, and shed a cold hue on the waters, were rent asunder, as if by the broad wave of some mighty hand—by Odin himself, the king of spells; and through the gap a blaze of saffron light was shed upon the fertile isle of Amack and Zealand's level shores—level save where a little chalky cliff, a venerable tower, or a clump of trees rose against the sky—part of that long succession of wood-bordered lawns which spread, with villas, cottages, and gardens, along the beautiful but monotonous coast from Elsineur to Copenhagen.

Opposite, bleak Scania reared up her iron and precipitous front, above which, and amid a pile of purple clouds, the sun was rising; and when these clouds were rolled away towards the north, the sky appeared in all its cold and Swedish purity of blue. At sea one's spirit naturally becomes exhilarated on a fine morning, when with a beautiful sunrise the wind is fair, and all the fleet are rolling before it, until their yard-arms almost dip, and we have our friends exchanging signals from the sides of the vessels; but I felt—I know not why—none of that ardour with which I should have hailed our entrance upon such an arena of war and glory as Stralsund: a foreboding of approaching sorrow—conduced probably by the certainty that, within a week at least, I would be separated from Ernestine—oppressed me, and I looked forward with no emotion of pleasure to the day we should drop our anchors on the Pomeranian shore.

Long ere the noonday sun had brightened the rippling water, and tinted with yellow the faint blue Scanian peaks, the towers of Kiöbenhafn, and the turrets of the old castle of Christianborg, faded away or sank into the gulf of Kjöge; the point of Falsterboro' in Sweden rose out of the water, and then we were breasting the short, foamy waves of the Baltic sea.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

STRALSUND.

STRALSUND was now the largest and most wealthy city in the duchy of Pomerania. Boasting of an origin that dated from Sünne II., king of the Franks, and deriving its name from the narrow *Sind* that lies between it and the isle of Rügen, it had gradually become a great commercial city, with vast trade and ample privileges, which its burghers had successfully defended against all princes who had endeavoured to subvert or subdue them; and once they had opposed with success and with victory the united arms of Sweden, Denmark, and ten other principalities. From thenceforward the stout burghers were considered unconquerable, and their city impregnable. Jaromar, prince of Rügen, increased the city in 1209, and his son first fortified it; after this its walls became gradually stronger, and there were no less than six gates and as many bridges facing the Sound, which extends one mile in breadth between it and Rügen. To the landward it was fenced round by regular bulwarks, and the lake of Franken, a falcon-shot in width; over this was a high causeway, with dams and bridges, every approach to which was barred by bastions and cavaliers, mounted by brass guns, and swept by numerous casemates.

Under the Count of Carlstein, a strong brigade of horse and foot lay intrenched before the gate that faced the causeway and lake of Franken. Major-general Arnheim assailed the right flank of the city, and Wallenstein in person pressed it on the left; but Stralsund, being open to the sea, was supplied with provisions from that quarter for a time, as all the shipping sent by Sigismund, king of Poland, to the assistance of the Emperor, had been sunk by the Scottish fleet in the Danish service—thus the Imperial generalissimo of the northern seas had not a single ship wherewith to blockade the harbour.

Colonel Heinrich Holka, whom Christian had appointed governor of Stralsund, with a mixed force of Scottish and Danish infantry, had considerably weakened his resources by neglect; and at the most desperate crisis of the siege, had found time to take unto himself a young and beautiful wife, celebrating his nuptials in a public manner, amid the dismayed and disheartened citizens, and immediately under the shot of the Imperial batteries. This act was deemed alike unwise, and at such a time improper. Poor Holka was displaced, and Field-marshal Sir Alexander Leslie of Balgonie (in Fifeshire), a cavalier who served the King of Sweden, and whose skill, as displayed in after years in Lower Saxony, and in the ever memorable wars of the National Covenant, must always mark him as a man of the highest military genius, was appointed to govern, defend, and rescue Stralsund.

Enraged by the affront, Colonel Holka changed banners, and joined the Emperor, who created him a count, and gave him a regiment of infantry. He, moreover, changed his religion no less than three times; but, being seized by the plague, died at last a Protestant, leaving behind him the usual reputation of the Imperialists—that of having been a wealthy, rapacious, dissolute, and ferocious soldier.

On the same evening that Christian, from the westward, sailed into the narrow strip of water between Rügen and Stralsund, a fleet, having the three crowns of Sweden flying at the mast-head of each ship, entered the east end of the Sound, having on board Sir Alexander Leslie, and five thousand of the gallant and well-appointed Scottish veterans of the glorious Gustavus—the star of the north! When anchoring close beside us, the Swedes opened their red ports and fired a royal salute on learning that King Christian was in the bay. Their sides were lined by men, and many a cry of welcome, of greeting, and recognition, were joyfully given and warmly responded to. The artillery of the town had no time to salute either of the fleets; for at that crisis the cannoniers of Wallenstein (who on the preceding night had returned from Gustraw) were redoubling their efforts, and his batteries were firing furiously on the city.

It was at that very time, when the united fleets of Chris-

tian IV. and Marshal Leslie anchored off the city, that Wallenstein, who from an eminence was watching us through his Galileo glass, swore so impiously—

“By the wounds of God ! I will take Stralsund, even if He slung it in chains between the heavens and earth ! I will make these Scottish wolves eat each other up, and teach them that Protestantism was buried on the day when I was born !”

And in a burst of angry fervour he kissed a consecrated medal, which had been suspended round his neck when a child by his mother, and which had never since been for a moment from his person. It was one of those said to have been struck at Rome, to commemorate the massacre of St. Bartholomew; but with what truth I pretend not to say.

Shot could not reach the seaward side of the city, therefore we were comparatively safe.

The evening sun was shining on its towers and spires, and on the blue water that reflected them ; and by my side stood Ernestine, pale and agitated, between the expectation of meeting her father—of weeping on his breast, and pouring out her tale of sorrow there ; and at the necessity for leaving me when about to engage in all the dangers of a desperate siege. She placed her arm through mine, and we stood in silence. I occasionally pressed her hand as if to reassure and reinind her that I was still by her side ; and divined her thoughts, which wandered to the faint white line that gleamed afar off in the sunset, and indicated the Imperial tents, visible between some of the openings of that stately city, where so many of our Scottish soldiers fought so nobly, and where, alas ! so many found their last home ; for the siege of Stralsund was one of the most determined and desperate events of the great German war—the sack of Magdeburg excepted.

In the still evening air the boom of the cannon was incessant on the landward or opposite side of the city ; and as the shadows deepened we could distinguish the lurid flashes reddening behind the outline of the spires and houses. Above them, in the blue sky, there hung the mingled smoke of the daily contest, deepening and darkening over the city as a pall—and a veritable pall it was ; for under it many a brave fellow found a soldier’s death, and a soldier’s coffinless grave.

"You still gaze at the Imperial tents, dear Ernestine," said I. Her eyes were full of tears.

"Yes, Philip; for now we must part, and the sooner it is over the better—for the sooner you will see me again. The king is approaching, ask him concerning my transmission—now—now! there is not a moment to be lost!"

I took off my bonnet and approached Christian IV., but paused on seeing our colonel, Sir Donald, in the act of presenting a greyhaired cavalier, who had just come on board. He was plainly accoutred in an unlaced buff-coat and black iron cuirass, over which hung the Swedish order of the Tower and Sword.

"Stay, Philip," said Ian; "that is the great Sir Alexander Leslie, the conqueror of the Poles at Dantzig."

I looked with interest at this remarkable man, whose talent, bravery, and adventurous genius had won him a European reputation, and were yet to make him the founder of a noble Scottish family. He was short in stature, and somewhat decrepit in figure; but had a round and pleasant face, a short beard and mustaches, well pointed up; grey hair shorn short, *à la soldatesque*, and a visage embrowned by constant exposure to the weather.

I heard him acquaint the king of the number of his regiments and their colonels, among whom I remember the Lord Spynie, Colonel Alexander Seaton, and Sir Patrick Ruthven, of loyal and gallant memory.

In the midst of this, Christian's eye had observed me standing bonnet in hand, a little in the background, and he immediately said—

"Do you wish to address me, Herr Captain?"

"Whenever your majesty is at leisure."

"Speak now, Mein Herr."

"The daughter of Count Carlstein, whom your majesty has been pleased to protect, has sent me to beg that you will have the kindness to order her transmission, to that part of the Imperial lines where the troops of the count, her father, are cantoned."

"No officer in Stralsund would venture on such a service,"

said Sir Alexander Leslie, who was pleased to survey me with particular attention.

“Is the duty so sharp here, marshal?” asked the king.

“No man can venture a pistol-shot from the walls, as I am informed by Colonel Holka.”

“Desperate though it be,” said I; “I will gladly undertake this duty.”

“Captain Rollo is one of my best officers,” his majesty was pleased to reply; “and I assure you, marshal, that I cannot afford to lose him.”

Old Sir Alexander Leslie, who had given a casual glance at Ernestine, and had perceived, as the wind blew her veil aside, that she possessed uncommon personal attractions, gave me a knowing smile, and said—

“Captain, it is alike a moral and physical impossibility to communicate in any way with the Imperialists, who fire indiscriminately upon every one, and shoot all that dare approach their posts, even under cartel. Give my word—the word of auld Balgonie, to the young lady, and say that unless, with woman’s wilfulness, she prefers danger to safety, she cannot now be transmitted to the Imperial camp; but that until her friends become more courteous, until they are vanquished or the city falls, she shall have the best house in Stralsund. Does this meet with your majesty’s approval?”

“In every way, Sir Alexander. You have spoken my thoughts and wishes regarding a charming young lady, whom I pledged my word to protect; and whom I now confide to your care. You have heard, madam, the views of our brave marshal.”

Ernestine bowed with a sweet smile to his majesty, and with the dignity of a queen—a Spanish, and not a German one.

I own this arrangement did not displease me; and, after explaining to Ernestine the impossibility of reaching the Imperial camp at present, I added every thing else that might console her. Other ideas came into my head; and it seemed to me that Colonel Holka, in marrying his pretty young wife amid the turmoil of a protracted siege, took neither a bad nor unwise method of solacing himself during the horrors by which he was no doubt surrounded.

These thoughts recurred to me again and again. The advantage that would accrue to Ernestine in having a legitimate protector was quite apparent; but then her sister's recent death, and her present helpless condition, restrained me from advancing such a project. Moreover, to the count it might seem that an undue advantage had been taken of those peculiar circumstances by which she had been thrown among us so strangely and alone.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WAR.

"WE have sharp service before us here, Ian," said I, as in the cold grey light of an autumn morning we paraded on deck next day for disembarkation.

"Yes, Philip, and that omens of coming events may not be wanting, harken to the news brought from the city by Major Fritz!"

"News," said that cavalier, as he assisted his friend Karl to clasp on his cuirass; "by my soul 'tis enough to make one's hair stand on end, and to frighten a troop-horse!"

"Quite a prodigy, is it Fritz?" asked Karl.

"Gentlemen," continued the major with all seriousness, "the wife of Colonel Dubbelsteirn has just been delivered of a fine little boy——"

"Bah—and what is there in that?" asked M'Alpine, and several of our officers.

"What is there in it?" retorted the Danish major, indignantly; "there is something very remarkable, when we consider the way it came into the world!"

"Has it a tail?" asked Kildon.

"Or horns?" added Culoraigie.

"It is quite unlike any of you," retorted Fritz; "'tis a plump little boy, as fat as Bacchus, or the colonel himself (and we all know that he fully realizes the old Friesland proverb, *Grette arseen behove wyde bræken*.) The baby has been born in buff-coat and jack-boots, like a little trooper, and the whole city is ringing with the tidings of so marvellous a birth."

"Buff-coat and jacks—by Heaven, he is laughing at us!" said our Celts, twisting their mustaches.

"I assure you, gentlemen, that it is quite as the major says,"

said Karl; "but he has omitted to add that this miraculous bantling has the buttons of the Sleswig musketeers on its doublet——"

"A major's scarf," suggested Ian.

"And short brown mustaches," added Karl.

"Laugh as you please, gentlemen—but visit the Fraü Dubbelstein, and satisfy yourselves. Hal! the drums are beating,—there sound your pipes, gentlemen Schottlanders, and now for the shore!"*

There was a solemn prayer given by our regimental preacher on deck, where all our soldiers paraded under arms, in full marching order; and he also gave us a brief discourse on that verse of Samuel, which records how Saul "gathered a host, smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands that spoiled them," applying it to the rescue of Stralsund from the fangs of the Empire.

We then disembarked in the Danish boats, and landed on the mole while the morning sun was yet low, and a dense bank of fog was rolling slowly upward from the strip of water that lay between us and the Isle of Rügen.

Well muffled up in Russian sables, with two female servants nestling beside her, Ernestine was rowed ashore in the barge of Sir Nikelas Valdemar, and the king's own Live Knecht and Baron Karl, the quartermaster-general, were desired to obtain for her a handsome and suitable mansion, among the many whose wealthy owners had abandoned them, and fled into Pomerania at the approach of Wallenstein. A residence was soon selected.

The rich hangings, the magnificently carved and gilded furniture, the chairs of white satin, brocaded with gold, the tables inlaid with ivory and ebony; jars of Dresden china, Japan canisters, Persian carpets, flowers in vases of Delft, and statues of Parisian alabaster—all that taste could invent and wealth procure, were remaining in this delightful billet, just as the rich corn-trader to whom the house belonged had left them. The

* A similar prodigy is said to have happened in the city, stormed soon after by Pappenheim; a child was born in *steel cap and cuirass!* see the "Brief but authentic relation in High Dutch."

rooms were all tapestried or panelled, and each panel was a picture representing Flemish ships and German farms, Dutchmen skating, and sea-pieces. The key which put us in possession of all these fine things, was the simple application of a musket-shot to the keyhole; and then, the door flew open.

The house was pleasantly situated, having in front a view of the Sound, with the Saxon and Pomeranian shores, while behind, it was completely screened from the fire of the Imperial batteries, by the masses of intervening streets. Thick clumps of Dutch poplars, with bright green foliage, half hid the front of the house, which stood a few yards back from the main street. A long flight of steps ascended to its gaudily painted door, and on each step stood two porcelain vases, with flowers in full bloom.

Ernestine was charmed by the appearance of the place; but said that, with all its splendour, she would have preferred a corner of her father's tent.

Other ladies, the wives of fugitive German nobles, were placed in the same house. Thus, in the hope that they would form a pleasant little community, whose safety depended upon our valour, we marched, with drums beating and colours flying, to the Frankendör, the post assigned us; and the scene—as the event proved—of the most hazardous and desperate service in that beleaguered city.

It was the *weakest* point, too; otherwise the old Scottish Invincibles had not got it to defend.

The aspect of the citizens—men who until this time had given their whole souls to peaceful occupations, and to the quiet acquisition of wealth—men whose ledgers had long since superseded their Bibles—whose God was a mere golden idol; whose whole thoughts were of pounds, dollars, and stivers—hides, tallow, corn and cheese, ships and storehouses; whose passion was wealth, and whose arid hearts had been ossified to mere ink-horns, was pitiable in the extreme. In neglected attire, with wan and dejected countenances, they moved stealthily about, their eyes at times aghast with terror, and always expressive of anxiety and alarm; while surveying ruefully their deserted mole, their places of business thronged by soldiers and encumbered by the munition of war; their best houses and public buildings

turned into barracks, or battered, dinted, and defaced by cannon-shot; their trees cut down to form abbatis; their pavements torn up, and thoroughfares trenched, to make parapets, breastworks, and traverses; their market-places ringing incessantly to the tramp of armed troopers, the clank of artillery-wheels, the rattle of drums, and the wild yell of the Scottish war-pipe, as the various duties of defending their beautiful city—now transformed into one vast garrison—were vigorously executed under the orders of Sir Alexander Leslie.

With all the recklessness of foreign soldiers defending a town, about the actual protection of which they cared not the value of a rush, our Danes and Germans destroyed and defaced whatever they could not defile. The churches were turned into hospitals, where the wounded and dying lay side by side upon beds or pallets of straw, presenting a hideous combination of suffering and misery. Chapels were converted into cooking places, where the messmen lighted fires on the pavement; and where the soldiers laughed and sang, as their camp-kettles simmered upon fires that were composed of carved oak-work, altar-screens, pews, pulpits, and whatever came first to hand and bill-hook; and where the flames, thus recklessly lit, blazed above the ashes of the dead, encircling the gothic pillars, licking their foliated capitals, filling the vaulted roofs with smoke, and blackening the fretted stone-work, which they failed to ignite.

In other churches, the Baron Karl's pistoliers and the cavalry were cantoned; and there the long legends and brasses on the pavement, expressive of piety and faith, of human vanity or earthly mortality, as they enumerated the life, the death, and rank of those who slept below, were defaced by horses' hoofs, or hidden by the litter and mire that defiled those stately temples, which had been founded and consecrated in the earlier ages of Christianity by some of those northern missionaries, the relation of whose labours were the theme and the glory of our old friend, Father Ignatius d'Eydel.

We marched to the Frankendör, a ravelin that lay immediately without the walls, and was an indifferent breastwork, before which lay a dry ditch, having in its front the lake of Franken; on the opposite bank, the brigade of Count Carlstein

(old Rupert-with-the-Red-plume) was securely ensconced, though within less than the distance of a cannon-shot, by trenches and embankments, basketed up for their culverins. These, for the present, were silent; but we could perceive that the Imperialists were busy erecting two *camarade* batteries of ten guns each, to which we could only oppose a species of *tambour* work, which we foresaw would afford us very little shelter unless strengthened.

Wallenstein's line of circumvallation reached the count's left flank; Arnheim's line reached his right: thus the unhappy city had been completely enclosed on the landward side, and cut off from all the supplies it usually received from Mecklenburg, Saxony, and Pomerania.

Major-general Johan Gorge Arnheim, a gentleman of Brandenburg, and director to the elector of Saxony, had the third command in the army of Wallenstein, and was one of the bravest and most accomplished soldiers in the Imperial army; but to military talents of the highest class, he unfortunately united all the craft and dissimulation of a statesman. Hence his treachery to the Poles and to the Swedes on many occasions; till even Wallenstein suspected him of sinister designs against himself, and despatched him from Stralsund, with 10,000 men, to the assistance of Sigismund, King of Poland, who was then at war with Gustavus, dismissing him with this brief and vain-glorious order:—

“ Arnheim—March! drive Gustavus out of Poland; and, in case you fail, send to tell him that I—Wallenstein—will come and effect it.”

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE FRANKENDÖR.

SIR ALEXANDER LESLIE, who was designated "Governor of all the cities upon the Baltic coast," made a rapid and able survey of the whole town; and, for its immediate defence, ordered the erection of new barricades to defend our avenues, and batteries to sweep those of the enemy. Fascines were made and filled with earth; all houses near the gates were loopholed for musketry, and had their lower rooms filled with stones and rubbish, to prevent the passage of the German cannon-shot; while all edifices of every kind that impeded the fire of our batteries or musketry, were instantly levelled to the ground.

In every way the Scottish marshal proved himself worthy of the high trust reposed in him by the allied princes of the north. While some of our soldiers who had been bakers (or, as we call them, *baxters*), were ordered to prepare vast quantities of biscuit for the garrison and the citizens, others were employed in making up ball-cartridges, cannon baskets, platforms, and other military works. New wells were sunk, the old repaired, and tanks were filled with water, while the hospitals were cleaned out and purified. Amid all this lively bustle—which was a severe reprobation on the inertness of Colonel Holka—the poor citizens forgot the horrors of their two months' siege, and worked among our soldiers with ardour and satisfaction.

Wallenstein was aware that 5000 Scots had entered the city under Leslie, whom he knew to be the most able general of the great Gustavus. He was also aware, by what he knew of Leslie's military character, acuteness, and resources, that, unless crushed, he might be foiled before that city, he had so solemnly sworn to win; thus, taking advantage of the unusual commotion within it, he made a fresh reconnaissance, and, observing that the Frank-

endör was the weakest and least defensible post, resolved on assailing it during that night.

Our soldiers were bivouacked within this ravelin that overlooked the Frankenlake. There I had left them for an hour to visit Ernestine; but the hour gradually extended from one to two, and from two to three, and the church clocks which still survived the various bombardings of the last few weeks, were just striking the hour of eleven, on the 24th of June—a day by old memories the dearest to a Scottish heart—when the report of two heavy cannon fired from the citadel, pealed over the roofs and streets of the unfortunate town, announcing a night attack.

The thought flashed like lightning upon me, that the regiment might be engaged—that I had been three hours absent, and that Sir Donald might miss me from my post. Thus, to start up, to snatch my sword and steel-bonnet, to press my lip to the pale cheek of Ernestine, and hurry into the street, were all the work of a moment, and I was away!

A storm was raging, and though the season was summer, and the month was June, it was a severe one. A torrent of rain had fallen, and a tempest of wind had swept over the city, levelling many of the shattered houses on the stray passengers and on our working parties; but I had been so pleasantly occupied during my tête-à-tête with Ernestine, that I had heard nothing of it; and now, on issuing into the street, I was surprised to find it covered by puddles of mud and water, while dust, fragments of tiles, and wet leaves, were swept past me on the hurrying wind. Dark clouds enveloped the sky, and after pausing for a moment in the dark and unlighted thoroughfare, irresolute which way to turn, the report of a volley of musketry drew me towards a part of the long and deserted way, by which I reached the Frankendör, arriving just in time to find my comrades about to be engaged, and our drums beating the *Point of War*. Being wetted by the rain their sound was dull and hollow, but the wild pipes were shrill and high as ever.

Though the scenery was flat and level, there was something impressive and terrific in the storm, and the night was so dark, that, when I assumed command of my company at one of the faces of the ravelin, I could not discern the enemy.

Before us lay the dark bosom of the Frankenlake; above was a black and stormy sky, where enormous masses of vapour were rolling and intermingling on the wings of that squalling wind, which swept over Stralsund in loud and incessant gusts. The rain had ceased, and there was at times a close, oppressive, and sulphurous heat.

Suddenly, like a mighty gorge between two black mountains, the clouds were divided in heaven; a lambent light edged with brilliance their torn and rugged outlines, and the forked lightning was shot from the opening, like long red arrows of fire.

For a moment, while these levin brands were lighting earth and heaven with their ghastly glare, we could distinctly perceive the bastions of the ravelin, and the ranks of the regiment; for all its bonnets of steel, and bright musket-barrels, glittered in the gleam above the stone parapet and redoubts of turf. I could see the strong beeches, bending like willows before the breath of the sweeping storm, the turgid waters of the Frankenlake, and the countless bright points—helmets, pike-heads and musket-barrels, cuirasses and standards, of two vast columns of infantry, that moved stealthily round each flank of its margin, to assail on two quarters the post we had orders to defend to the last—the Frankendör—the most untenable, and the weakest redoubt in the whole city of Stralsund.

The lightning passed away; the bright edges faded from the clouds, and the bosom of the lake and all its banks vanished into darkness, as instantaneously as they had become visible; but we had seen enough to acquaint us with the force, disposition, and intentions of the foe.

The thunder then rattled in deep hoarse peals across the sky, and died away in echoes over the isle of Rügen, and along the Pomeranian shore.

“Now, my brave lads—cock up your bonnets!” cried Sir Donald, whose deep and powerful voice rose above even the howling of the stormy wind; “‘tis the enemy—the Imperialists, who mean to beat up our quarters, and have sworn to beat us out of them; so let us give these gentlemen a good account of ourselves. Musketeers—look to your pouches, and hammer-stalls.”

These leather covers, by which our men protected their locks and matches from rain, were instantly unstrapped from the muskets, the pouches were opened, and I could perceive the red glow-worm-like gleam, as each musketeer lit his match at his comrade's lock, and all stood ready to fire upon the enemy, waiting only for the order in silence, and amid a stillness broken only by the sweeping gusts.

Another gleam of light shot between an opening in the clouds, and we saw the advancing columns nearer still—so near that their ladders, and other paraphernalia of escalade, were visible. Then the colonel spoke to the pipers who stood by his side, and the *onset* burst from their instruments; but the scream of the chanters and bray of the drones were lost and drowned in the roar of the musketry, for seven hundred barrels of steel were levelled at once over the parapet, and seven hundred flashes of red fire burst at once upon the murky night. Again the arms were loaded, and the rattle of iron ramrods and brass butts—the bustle of charging home the cartridges, casting about, blowing matches, and priming pans, became incessant; and with no other light to guide them than the occasional gleams of lightning, our soldiers poured volley after volley on those close ridges of helmets, strewing the route of the Imperialists with dead and dying men.

Wild hurrahs, shrieks, and outcries, were tossed towards us on the gusty wind, or were borne away to the seaward; and now, to add tenfold grandeur to the terrible and magnificent scene, the Imperialists shot a succession of fireballs into the air, and each one, as it soared like a mountain of fire, shed a flood of brilliance upon the rippled lake, the smoky ravelin, and the columns of Spanish and Austrian musketeers who were pouring forward to the attack. The explosion of these fireballs, which sprung like rockets above the lake and sheeted it with light, until they fell, to splutter, hiss, and float upon its surface (for neither wind nor water could extinguish their flames), had a most fatal effect for the assailants themselves, by enabling us to direct our fire upon them with the deadliest precision.

“Unhorse me yonder fellow with the Red Plume!” said Sir

Donald Mackay. "By my father's soul! 'tis his example alone that leads yon wavering column on! Down with him! level surely—Gillian M'Bane, thou art a deadly shot at a red deer or a capercailzie. My silver brooch to thine, if thou makest yonder fellow kiss the turf."

"Tis Rupert-with-the-Red-plume!" cried a hundred voices.

My heart leaped at the cry; but, before I could speak, Gillian M'Bane had fired, and I could perceive the cavalier indicated by the colonel—and who was an officer magnificently armed and accoutred, brandishing his long sword, and conspicuous by a scarlet plume—reel in his saddle; but the shot had only cut the lacing of his helmet, which rolled among his horse's feet; and still he pressed on, with his long grizzled hair, and longer cavalier-lock streaming on the wind.

"Spare that officer!" I exclaimed, striking up five or six levelled muskets with my sword. "I owe him my life, and more than my life; besides, he is my own near kinsman, though he serves the German emperor."

I spoke but in time! another moment had sent the poor count into eternity; for among our soldiers there were some of the most deadly marksmen, with bow or musket, that the Highlands could produce. For a whole hour we held the foe completely in check, and with comparatively little loss; for our parapet was breast high, and in many places defended or strengthened by the tambour work of palisades, which were ten feet long and each six inches thick, driven into the glacis three deep, and closely loopholed. These had been considerably injured by the discharges of the comrade battery; still they afforded us some protection, while, on the other hand, the Imperial columns suffered dreadfully.

Their front ranks were enveloped in smoke, from whence broke forth incessant flashes of fire; but, after four desperate attempts to cross the ditch and ascend the lower glacis, they were compelled to retire beyond the lake. The Spaniards fled with precipitation; but the Germans retreated slowly, with all the coolness, steadiness, and constitutional phlegm of their nation, and continued to fire occasional shots so long as we were within range of them.

By this time day had broken; a faint grey light had begun to steal along the waters of the Sound, gilding the church spires of Stralsund, the summits of the isle of Rugen, and whitening the pallid faces of the dead, who lay in hundreds by the shore of the Frankenlake, with distorted visages, eyeballs glazed, and jaws relaxed; for the aspect of those who die under the agony of gunshot wounds is often horrible.

The bright midsummer sun came up in his morning glory above the isle of Rugen, and the birds, as they sang their songs to the early day, twittered among the terrible debris of the past night's deadly work. The dew was on the verdant grass, and the bright flowers were raising their heavy cups and petals to that warm summer sun; but many a strong and many a brave man lay there, whose head would never rise again.

Many were lying there bleeding to death and crying aloud for help and for water; neither of which we could render, as the camarade battery and the fieldpieces had resumed their operations against the sconce; but many of the poor wretches crawled like bruised snails to the reedy margin of the shallow lake, and there perished miserably among the mud and slime, in futile efforts to quench their burning thirst.

During the whole day a cannonade was poured from every part of the city upon the trenches of Wallenstein, and with eighty pieces of cannon he replied. The walls seemed to be garlanded with fire, while the smoke ascended into mid air, and overhung all Stralsund. Before us, from one flank of the Imperial lines to the other, including the whole lake, long wreaths of pale blue smoke were floating, and in their bosom we heard the boom of the cannon, as the parallels drew nearer and more near, with the occasional patter of the quicker musketry.

Wallenstein, the soul of battle, had now for the first time found, in Leslie of Balgonie, an antagonist who was more than his equal, and who taught him the folly and impiety of the oath he had sworn—to storm Stralsund, even though it were slung in chains between the heavens and earth.

So passed the day, and in the streets, on the walls, and by the ravelins, as well as in the trenches of the enemy, the loss

of life was terrible; but towards evening the cannonade began to slacken, when the pieces became too hot for loading.

On the right flank of the Frankendör a low vapour seemed to approach us, and steel was seen to glitter amidst it at times. A few balls from a demi-cannon searched its dark womb, and then we saw a column of horse retire with precipitation.

So closed the day.

CHAPTER XL.

THE KIRK-BELL OF GOMETRA—THE SORTIE.

THE siege continued for several months, with various successes and repulses—with advances on one hand, and sorties on the other. The slaughter was great in the city, but greater in the trenches, where the dead lay in thousands, buried in shallow holes, and where the wild-dogs scraped away the earth by night, and the decaying masses tainted the humid summer air. From the walls we could easily distinguish where those hideous catacombs lay, and where the bodies, half decayed, were sweltering among the reeds and slime of the Frankenlake; for by day a dark cloud of flies swarmed over them, and by night the malaria that overhung the spot assumed an almost luminous tint. There, too, came the birds of prey; and there they remained hovering and gorging, until a musket-shot at daybreak put all to flight, save those whom the malaria, and their hideous repast, had rendered somewhat indisposed to fly.

Death had thinned the number of the citizens, whose aspect of misery increased daily; for the loss of friends, the loss of business, the destruction of their dwellings and property, the scarcity of money and of provisions, the prices of which were enormous, as all that our Fourriers could collect were seized and retained for the use of the troops; the aspect of each deserted holfe and bourse, where the merchants were wont to meet daily for the transaction of their lucrative and peaceful business—where vast sums once passed from pocket to pocket, and mighty deeds of transfer were executed—was also sorely changed. Torn down by the passing shot, columns, arcades, and balconies were strewn in fragments among the grass and moss that grew between the stones: here the trees, that whilome had shaded a pleasant boulevard, had been cut down to form an abattis; there

gabions and fascines, over which they flung the loose earth, and thus got rapidly under cover. Some of these pioneers were so bold in one place as to push their sap rollers to the foot of the outer glacis.

My daily visits to Ernestine threw a bright gleam of happiness athwart the murky cloud of war and desolation that surrounded us; and when seated by her side, in her pretty little boudoir, I forgot the miseries endured by us at the Frankendör, the desolation of the city, the desperate state—the starvation and death—to which we were hurrying, and which I strove to conceal from her for a time, but in vain.

Once, when I led her to the Frankendör during a brief cessation of hostilities, that she might see the white tents of her father's brigade, the wan visage, the anxious eyes, the tattered attire and fallen paunch of more than one once rotund and jovial city councillor, attracted her attention, and displayed, in language too powerful to be misunderstood, the undeserved miseries endured by the honest and industrious people of Stralsund.

Scottish porridge is certainly very good in its way; but as the best of food will pall the appetite by repetition, we soon tired of having nothing but porridge for breakfast, porridge for dinner, and porridge for supper. The tables of the Field-marshal commanding, of the burgomaster, and all the great men of the city, were limited to the same poor fare; and in some instances the aged, the sickly, and the mendicant, who were unable to raise the enormous sum for which an ounce of meal or of salted fish were sold in the market-place, were found dead in their litters of straw, or at the threshold of their doors, and reduced to mere skeletons.

War hardens the human heart, and love makes it selfish. I cared little for what happened to the poor citizens, provided Ernestine knew nothing of what they endured; but though Ian, Phadrig Mhor, and myself, parted with every thing we could spare—selling even our buckles, silver buttons, &c., to a Jew in the Platz, to procure the necessaries of life for her—even these began to fail, and in common with the rest I became desperate.

About this time Sir Alexander Leslie obtained intelligence—how, I know not—that a train of waggons, laden with provisions

the pavement had been torn up to face a bastion, and vast gaps had been beaten in the solid walls.

The scarcity of food increased, until the soldiers, at last, were brought as low as the citizens, and we had little else to subsist on than a few handfuls of Hamburg meal per man. This we boiled into porridge and ate with a little butter, for we were destitute of milk; every cow, sheep, and goat having been shot and eaten, even to the hides and entrails, long ago. Succour and provision from Rügen and the sea had now been cut off by various gunboats and armed crayers sent by Wallenstein into the Sound, from whence a storm had blown the dismantled Danish fleet. Thus we had nothing before us but starvation or death; and Sir Donald frequently urged that we should all sally forth, sword in hand, and cut a passage to some seaport on the Saxon shore. But the stout Laird of Balgonie vowed that he would never thus desert a city entrusted to his care by the princes of the north; and that to leave the Stralsunders to their fate would be alike unworthy of ourselves and of the ancient military fame of the Scottish people.

This argument was conclusive, and we all resolved to make our graves on the shore of Pomerania, if Gustavus Adolphus could not march to our assistance. Of that we saw not the least probability, for at that time he had his hands full of work in Poland, where, with thirty thousand men (ten thousand of whom were Scottish infantry), he was besieging Dantzig, storming Newbürg, Strazbürg, Dribenz, Sweitz, and Massovia. As for the unfortunate King of Denmark, who was then hovering near Count Tilly, off the Holstein shore, we never expected the least relief from him. Pay we had none, and very little provisions, but we had plenty of powder and shot of every description. The garrison was now reduced to four thousand Scots, and one thousand Germans, Danes, and Frenchmen, all worn by incessant toil, and scarcity of food, for they had a strong city to defend against a hundred thousand men, in whose rear lay all the vast resources of Germany and Flanders; for Wallenstein could command every thing between the Baltic and the gates of Vienna.

Pressing on their works, his pioneers laid down their sap rollers, and dug trenches in new places, facing them internally with

gabions and fascines, over which they flung the loose earth, and thus got rapidly under cover. Some of these pioneers were so bold in one place as to push their sap rollers to the foot of the outer glacis.

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About this time Sir Alexander Leslie obtained intelligence—how, I know not—that a train of waggons, laden with provisions

for the Imperialists, were coming towards Stralsund from Greifswalde, a fortified town of Prussian Pomerania, situated about fifteen miles distant, at the confluence of the Reik with the Baltic. Of those waggons he determined to possess himself, and on that night (the first of September) ordered Sir Donald Mackay with our regiment of Strathnaver, the Lord Spynie with his Lowland musketeers, and Sir Ludovick Leslie with his old Scots regiment, to march at dusk; and (while he, in person, was diverting the enemy's attention by scouring their trenches) endeavour to fall upon the post of the quartermaster-general, to seize some of the laden waggons, and at all hazards bring them into Stralsund.

Of this intended outfall I did not inform Ernestine, for if I returned safe, all would be well, and she would thus escape a few hours of unnecessary alarm and grief; if I was slain, poor girl! she would hear of it soon enough, for evil tidings always fly faster than good.

We paraded in the market-place without our colours, and silently the priming and loading was proceeded with. Fortunately the night was gloomy, though the wind was still, and a dense vapour that came heavily up from the sea, spread over the land and effectually concealed us, as in three dense columns we issued from a gate of the town, and marching between the Greifswalde road and the margin of the Sound, on the left flank of the city, softly approached the unconscious enemy. In this sortie there occurred an incident which I cannot help relating, even at the risk of being considered superstitious.

“Ochone!” said Phadrig Mhor, as he shouldered his Lochaber axe, “there is many a pretty man marching out just now, that will never come in again.”

“Most probably, Phadrig,” said I; “but why croak in this solemn tone?”

“I could name two,” said he, sinking his voice into a low and impressive whisper.

“Two—?”

“Ay, two, who will never march more—God bless and sain them both!”

“In the devil's name, what do you mean, Sergeant Mhor?”

"That to-night the kirk-bell of Gometra will toll."

"Well—and who will toll it?"

"How can I say, Captain Rollo—the fiend, perhaps; but this, I know, that it is no mortal hand that stirs its iron tongue. It tolls whenever a *M'Alpine* dies, and this night Red Angus will fall."

"Hush, Phadrig!" said I, "impressed by his Highland solemnity of manner, at such a time as this do not think of such things."

"I cannot help it. Last night I lay on guard at the Franken-dör. My head was rolled in my plaid, and the cold earth was my bed, but I slept as sound as if my resting-place had been on the soft heather of Cairneilar or my dear mother's hut in Strathdee, and I had a dream between the passing night and the grey morning. I saw M'Alpine and McColl, even as you may see them now, each marching at the head of his company, like a stately Highland gentleman; but high upon the breast of each there was—a shroud—to mark that death was near. The hands of Mary and her Son be over them, for they are both gallant men! Red Angus is strong as Cuchullin, and McColl is unerring as Conloch; but if they escape the black work of to-night, I will never trust more in dreams, though my father was a Taischatr, and the Taisch runs in the blood."

"Hush—hush!" said Sir Donald; "silence in the ranks."

"The soldiers of the quartermaster-general are Spaniards," said M'Alpine, in a whisper; "who commands them?"

"Hector M'Lean, a gentleman of Mull."

"M'Lean of Lochdon?" asked Angus, becoming pale.

"The same," replied the colonel; "a desperate and determined fellow."

Angus sighed through his clenched teeth; his hazel eyes filled with fire, and with a darkened brow he strode on at the head of his company.

"'Tis M'Lean who robbed him of his wife," said the sergeant, giving my plaid a twitch. "If they meet, there will be bloody work; and, as I have said, before morning the bell of Gometra will toll."

The night was dark, and a vapour from the sea rolled over

the level land, concealing our movements. We passed the right flank of the enemy, by keeping so far out upon the shore that we marched mid-leg deep in the sea, where we were completely shrouded by the mist and gloom. All was still even in the Imperial camp, which lay partly on our right, and partly in our rear; lights twinkled at times among the tents and trenches, and the faint sound of voices in argument or merriment, or the scrap of some hoarse German drinking ditty, stole upon the night; but, unheard and unseen, we reached the Greifswalde road, and, according to the orders of Marshal Leslie, drew up in close columns under shelter of a thick wood, which grew on each side of the pathway. There we were to remain *en perdue* for three hours, after which we were to return to the city by the seashore; but, if we were discovered, or if the foe extended his flank towards the water, we ran the eminent risk of being cut off to a man. Even if we were successful—that is, if we captured the whole train of waggons, and succeeded in conveying them towards Stralsund, by breaking through the Austrians from their rear, it appeared to me that we would be swallowed up like Pharaoh's host, if not by waves of the sea, at least by the masses of men who were certain to close in upon us; but I knew not that, at the sound of the first shot, old Leslie was to sally forth at the head of his own regiment of Fife and Angus men, to scour the trenches of the enemy's left, and cause a complete diversion and confusion.

All occurred just as we would have wished. After two weary and anxious hours spent in the wood, listening to every passing sound, the cracking of whips, the creaking of wheels, and the heavy rolling sound of the laden wains, that groaned under their load of food (the very idea of which spread a glow from our hungry stomachs to our hearts), were heard approaching by the hard and dusty road from Greifswalde. At times we heard the drivers and the Croatian cavalry, which formed their escort, singing a wild chorus, that was swept past us upon occasional puffs of wind.

All our field-officers were on foot; each captain was at the head of his company; the pikemen were flanked by musketeers; the priming was looked to, and the matches were blown. By

Sir Donald's orders, the regiments of Ludovick Leslie and the Lord Spynie drew up in line, flanked outwards, on each side of the road, but still under cover of the trees, and every man of them lay flat on the grass, with his weapon beside him. Our regiment (being then about a thousand strong) he divided into two wings. In person he led the right, and posted it across the roadway in front of the waggons, barring all passage. Ian led the left, with orders to "wheel, right shoulders forward, to close upon their rear, and cut the escort to pieces without a moment's hesitation, lest by their sharp sabres they might hamstring the horses, or sever the traces by which they drew the waggons."

These dispositions had scarcely been made when they were amidst us, and between our double lines—twenty waggons laden with bags of flour, and barrels of butter, beer, and brandy, each drawn by two horses, and escorted by two regiments of Croats and Pandoors, wearing short doublets of fur and chain-shirts, long white breeches, and triple-barred helmets, and armed with short crooked swords, iron maces, and long rifled muskets slung across their bodies.

"Ready—present—fire!" cried Sir Donald.

From the muzzles of eighteen hundred muskets the streaks of fire flashed upon the gloom of that darkened hollow, and struck the escort with terror and confusion, piling horses and men over each other in heaps. Then charging them headlong in the smoke, we closed in from four points with clubbed muskets, with levelled pike, with claymore, and Lochaber-axe; for we knew there was not a moment to be lost, as that volley would rouse all Wallenstein's mighty camp, like one vast hornet's nest upon us.

Taken at such disadvantage the Croats and Pandoors were soon routed, but not without a desperate struggle; for disdaining, or unable to use their long muskets, they attacked us with their cimetars. Their well-trained horses, light but active animals, with hides of spotless white, and long switch-tails, actually tore our men with their teeth like wild beasts; thus enabling their savage riders to make a terrible use of their slender lances, their sharp sabres, and maces of pointed steel, by one of which Captain M'Coll of that Ilk was struck down and left as dead. Shoulder to shoulder, Highlander and Lowlander poured through

the narrow defile on each side of the waggons, driving out the Croats and Pandoors, forcing them by dint of pike and musket to retire in irremediable disorder, leaving at least five hundred men and horses strown on the road. There, the killed and wounded Pandoors were distinctly visible by their white breeches and picturesque pelisses of white fur.

The waggons were now put in motion; and the drivers being all shot or unhorsed, a number of Spynie's pikemen, who had been Lowland plough-lads, sprang upon the trams or saddles, and grasped the reins; sword-points, pike-heads, and whips, were applied to the sluggish bullocks and Holsteiners; and at a tremendous pace the waggons were driven down towards the sea, the wheels bounding and crashing over the prostrate bodies of killed and wounded men and horses. Shrieks, yells, and hoarse maledictions followed us as we hurried towards the shore, forming in our ranks as we went. A partial gleam of moonlight now shot along the water, as it seemed between two banks of vapour. The aspect of the ocean, though it shone like a placid mirror, while shedding silent ripples on the yellow sand, stayed the fierce career of the horses, and they entered it fetlock deep, and then knee deep, with a slowness and caution that enabled us to overtake the waggons, and form in order between them and the now alarmed enemy, whose right flank we were skirting.

At that moment, far distant on the Imperial left, we heard several heavy volleys, and then one continued roar of musketry. This announced to us that Sir Alexander Leslie, with his own regiment of Scots, was scouring the trenches and causing a diversion in our favour. As the mist began to clear, we could perceive across the level landscape the locality of this other conflict by the murky air, the smoky, lurid and irregular light it occasioned.

This *diversion* was not so complete as the marshal expected it to prove; for the sudden clearing of the mist and the beaming of the moon upon the water, enabled Colonel M'Lean, who commanded a brigade of Spaniards on the Imperial right, to perceive the long and straggling line of men, horses, and waggons, dotting, as it were, with black spots the shining water, as they came out of one bank of vapour and vanished into another in the direction of the city.

Filing from his trenches by a double-quick march, the colonel (a brave soldier of fortune and a Catholic) brought his brigade of Spanish musketeers to the shore; and there, supported by a squadron of cuirassiers and some companies of Walloon infantry, threw forward his left flank to give us a cross fire.

Sir Donald, with our pikes, five hundred strong, led the van, which marched above their garters in the sea till every kilt was floating. The Spaniards fired a volley, by which, at least, one hundred men were shot, or drowned, by being severely wounded; but, ere they could reload, we were among them, and at their very throats; and now ensued one of the deadliest conflicts ever witnessed by the walls of Stralsund, since Jaromar built them by the Baltic sea.

The three regiments formed at once in brigade order by double companies, pikes in the centre and musketeers on the flanks; Sir Donald was in front, with his silver target braced upon his left arm, and his long claymore in his right hand.

“Santiago!” shouted the Spaniards of Camargo’s regiment; “Santiago y cierra Espana!”

“Keep together like a wall!” exclaimed their colonel. “God and St. James of Compostella will open a path for us through this herd of Scottish curs.”

Then came the hoarse hurrah of the German cuirassiers, and the wilder cheer of the Walloon infantry.

“Forward, gentlemen and comrades!” exclaimed Mackay, with a voice that swept over the water like a trumpet; “forward at push of pike, and hew me a passage through these Spaniards!”

“St. Andrew, St. Andrew!” cried Lord Spynie, who was on foot by his side, and the whole brigade repeated the old Scottish war-cry, as we swept forward splashing through the silvery water like a mighty phalanx towards the Spaniards, upon whom we burst with incredible fury, as I have said, before they had time to reload. Highland clansmen and Lowland musketeers went on like a wall of steel. It was a renewal of the wars of old; for again the dark-browed Celt and the fair-haired Goth were fighting against the descendants of the old Iberians.

Being formed in eight ranks deep, after the old fashion of Tilly, they withstood our charge with a solid front, and a fero-

cious conflict began ; the pikemen charging with their shortened pikes, others plying their clubbed muskets like flails, and the officers using their claymores with both hands, or withdrawing their left only to handle their dirks, or fire their long Scottish pistols right into the eyes of the Spaniards.

So great was the confusion of this conflict, maintained mid-leg in the water, that for a time I stood like a statue, with my sword raised above my head, incapable of deciding on which side the blow should descend.

The crash of musket-butts falling in full swing upon pike shafts and steel caps ; the sharp rasp of sword-blades against each other, or upon tempered corslets, from which, by every thrust or blow, they struck the sparks in showers ; the discharge of firelocks and pistols ; the cries, groans, and oaths ; the swaying to and fro, and the desperate struggles of those who, on their weapons being broken, grasped each other by the throat or beard, with hands ungloved, and strove on this side or on that to drag their adversary down beneath the bloodstained water, then reduced to a mass of dingy and gory mud ; and all this combined when seen under the cold, ghastly glare of a northern moon, with the sea around us, the floating vapour on one hand, and on the other the confused background of Stralsund, and those trenches where old Leslie was waging a conflict as deadly, made up one of the most infernal medleys of horror that was ever beheld by the eye of a soldier.

Conspicuous in this *melée*, I perceived the high eagle's wings of Ian, as he dealt his cuts and thrusts, now under and now over the round shield which covered his breast ; and by his side was gigantic Phadrig, swaying his ponderous pole-axe with all the coolness and deliberation of a mower.

Amid this brief but terrible conflict, by the irresistible decree of fate, or the strong instinct of deadly hatred, Red Angus M'Alpine encountered and recognised Colonel Hector M'Lean, and each greeted the other with an exclamation of ferocious joy.

“ Hector of Lochdon !” said Angus, in a hoarse voice.

“ Angus Roy !” cried the Imperialist, and they pressed upon each other with a fury too great to last. The former was fired by the memory of his son's death ; the latter by the loss of his

wife, and the undeserved sorrow, shame, and ruin, brought upon his hearth and home.

They were no longer men ; they fought like wild animals ; for all the long-treasured fury of a Highlander, who has wrongs to avenge and insults to wipe out by the sword, swelled up in their hearts, and Red Angus was no more the same man—the same merry comrade we had known and served with so long. Disdaining to parry the thrusts of M'Lean, he raised his heavy sword above his head with both hands, and clove him down through steel and bone to the edge of the gorget ; at the same moment he received a shot in the breast, and with a wild cry threw his arms aloft, and fell lifeless, into the sandy water.

Enraged by his fall the regiment swept on, and who could resist them ?—those children of the mist and the battle—those true sons of the sword, as Ossian called their sires in the times of old. Nor Goth, nor Spaniard—Imperial horseman, nor Walloon musketeer—for they were shred away like the red leaves when the autumn wind pours down the mountain side ; and there, as at Lüttter and Leipzig, the glorious valour of my Scottish comrades bore all before it.

So great was the confusion, that I do not think I struck one blow that night.

The brigade broke through like a mighty wedge, and, with the loss of three hundred men killed and wounded, reached Stralsund with all the waggons save one, after giving the foe such an *alerie* as Wallenstein had never experienced before, while his trenches on the other flank received such a scouring, that his trench guards kept surer watch ever after. In fact, so severely were they handled by Sir Donald Mackay in one place, and old Marshal Leslie in the other, that the night of the outfall or sortie from Stralsund, was never forgotten by the army of the Empire ; but was always remembered with mingled rage and dissatisfaction.

Among many bodies that were floated by the sea near our outworks, we found, some days after, the remains of poor Angus M'Alpine ; which, though mutilated by the fish, and distorted by death, we could easily recognise, by his dress, his harness, and the crape scarf, which as usual was bound to his left arm. We buried him with all the honours of war, placing in the same

grave Sergeant M'Gillvray of Drumnaglas, who died of a wound received by a musket-shot on the night of the sortie.

I have since been told, though I cannot vouch for the truth of it, that at the very time poor Angus fell (between the night and morning) the bell of his village kirk emitted a deep and hollow sound.

Captain M'Coll was not killed, being found alive by some German harridans who where stripping the dead; he was saved from their knives by the famous Colonel Gordon of Tzerchkzi's regiment, by whom he was made prisoner and sent to Wallenstein. The latter committed him to the castle of Dillingen on the Danube (where the Scottish Colonel Ramsay was starved to death), and there he remained in captivity for eight long years. Being released by Count Leslie, he returned home to find that his good lady, after waiting seven years and a day, had become weary or despaired in his absence; and after having him summoned by name, with all possible legal formality, by sound of a horn, at the nearest market-cross, and thrice over at the pier-end of Leith, had taken unto herself another spouse, who met poor M'Coll at the door of his own dwelling, and threatened to hang him as an impostor upon his own dule-tree.

Disgusted by such a reception, and shrinking from the shame of having to sue for his own wife before the Lords of Session, he returned again to Germany, and fell, as major of Sir John Hepburn's regiment, at the great battle of Nordlingen.

Book the Thirteenth.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE WHITE FLAG.

THE provisions, procured at so much danger and with such loss, were a seasonable, but scanty relief; for nineteen waggon-loads of flour and butter went but a short way among the starving population of Stralsund; and I remember that the strong taste of the Griefswalde garlic made most of our men ill. The fields around that notable Hans Town abound with this plant, which usually flowers about Whitsuntide; thus all the flesh of their cattle, with the milk and butter, taste of it—at least we thought so.

Provoked by the alarm and loss he had suffered, and by the temporary supply of a day's food procured for Stralsund, Wallenstein ordered the trenches to be pushed on with greater vigour, and urged the blockade by sea, taking advantage of the absence of King Christian, who was then lingering about Wolgast (the capital of a duke of the house of Pomerania), in the hope of being joined by Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, and Major-general Slammersdorf, who were endeavouring to rouse the timid boors of the Danish isles; but it always happened unfortunately, that when the eloquence, ardour, or gold of the gallant duke mustered a few recruits, the terrible aspect of the old grumbler Slammersdorf, minus a leg, an arm, an eye, and all over cuts and patches, invariably scared and scattered them to their farms and fastnesses in the woods.

The cannonading continued daily without cessation; but so admirable were the means of defence, and so excellent were the precautions taken by Marshal Leslie, that the loss of life in

Stralsund was trifling when compared to the slaughter, made by our cannon and musketry, among the Imperial pioneers and trench-guards; but still starvation stared us gauntly in the face; and some of the poorer class of citizens, after devouring dogs and cats, and every animal, even to their household storks, perished of sheer destitution.

We received not a farthing of pay at that time; and I remember that Major Fritz, by establishing a liaison with a generous old countess, contrived to keep himself and the officers of his regiment, as he said, "in very good feather." I remember, also, the Baron Karl saying in jest—

"Der Teufel! Captain Rollo, if this starvation is pressed much further, we shall all be reduced to eat horses, like our Scandinavian ancestors!"

This actually became the case; twenty of Karl's pistoliers were dismounted by order of Sir Alexander, and their horses were shot, flayed, and exposed for sale in the market-place, where a wild assemblage of hungry women and hollow-eyed children beheld this hideous food displayed at an exorbitant price by the burgomaster; and where strong men contended with them, for the hoofs, the entrails, and offal.

By the kindness of Doctor Pennicuik, the head of our medical staff, I was enabled to procure many little things for Ernestine, without which I do not believe she could have survived on the coarse, scanty, and uncertain supplies of food received by the troops. Yet to convey her out of Stralsund was impossible; for the cannon and musketry of the enemy prevented all egress; and twice cartels with flags of truce had been fired on, though sent out with the intention of craving that the wives and children of the citizens, and various Imperial prisoners then in our possession, might be permitted to leave the gates.

Around Ernestine and myself, death and disaster had narrowed our circle of dear friends; but our tenderness for each other increased; and, when off duty, my time was constantly spent in bestowing consolation and attentions on my beautiful charge. One day, about this time, I was sitting with the Baron Karl and Major Fritz at the window of a house which overlooked the bastions of the Frankendör, which my regiment still occupied,

and from whence we could see the Imperialists in their trenches beyond the lake. Karl and I were lunching on a piece of young horse, which had been delicately broiled by his servant; and, as the baron was quartermaster-general, he had contrived that we should have the additional luxuries of pepper and salt, with a hard biscuit each, and a can of muddy wine to wash down the steaks of the poor bay trooper.

“Another slice, baron, if you please,” said I, after my second had vanished.

“Ah—you like it then! I question much if Fritz, or his old widow, have often a repast so tender; for this was the youngest horse in my troop—quite a foal, poor brute! However, I beg that we may call it excellent venison, only that it has not been kept long enough by our cook.”

“Call it what you please, Karl,” said Fritz; “but I will not permit my countess to be laughed at. She is a generous old dame, and quite adores me! She lavishes on me the contents of her larder and wine-cellar; I lavish my tenderness on her in return. ‘Tis the best way of subsisting, when the military chest and the market-place are alike empty.”

“But is not this dish excellent?”

“Admirable! Your cook will make his fortune; and to dine with you will become quite a proverb. Instead of ‘Lucullus dines with Lucullus,’ people shall say, ‘We are to dine with Karl’—in his repasts he is a perfect Sybarite. *Mensa prima*—horse-flesh with salt; *Mensa Secunda*—ditto, with pepper!”

“But what are the Imperialists about?” said I; “something unusual is stirring by the side of the lake.”

“Some Imperialists are launching a boat—and there are several men crowding into her.”

“One tall fellow wears a red feather,” said I.

“‘Tis Rupert of Carlstein himself! For what can the old blockhead wish to sail on the lake, right under our batteries?”

“‘Tis a fast day,” said Karl, “and perhaps he is going to fish, supposing that our twenty-four pounders may have roused a few eels from the mud of the lake.”

“Come, come, Herr Baron,” said I, “the count is my particular friend, and I have to beg——”

“Pardon me, I forgot. One of course does not like to hear that man called a blockhead who may say to one some morning, ‘My dear fellow, I have the most sincere respect for you—I love you as if you were my own son, the child of my dear defunct so and so. I will give with my daughter the chateau of Giezar, and my fief of Koenigratz, with 100,000 doubloons in hard and heavy cash.’ Der Teufel! I would not like to hear him spoken of otherwise than in the highest strain of commendation; but come—another slice of the venison!”

“See—they have unfurled a white flag of truce.”

“Then I hope your Scots at the Frankendör, will receive it as Arnheim received those with which I twice approached Wallenstein—that is, with a smart volley of musketry.”

We snatched up our swords, and hurried down to the Frankendör, which we reached just as the boat grounded, and three men, one of whom bore a white standard displayed from a halbert, approached the gate that faced the lake.

One was a gaudily attired drummer, who beat a long roll, during which the trio stood until a Highland drummer beat a reply; then they approached, and we could perceive that one of our visitors was a herald (clad in the magnificent tabard of the Imperial college), and in the other, by his rich dress and stately figure, I recognised at once the count, the father of Ernestine, and my father’s brother, though he was then ignorant of our relationship. I burned with impatience to address him; but neither the place nor the time suited. Ian despatched Phadrig Mhor for orders to the quarters of the marshal commanding, who desired that neither the herald nor his companions were to be admitted, even blindfold, lest they might merely be a party come to spy our defences and destitute condition; and that he would question them in person.

After a few minutes’ delay, the venerable Leslie approached the klinket of the Frankendör; it was opened, and he stepped out alone and unattended to receive the envoys of the Duke of Friedland. As he passed out, I said to him hurriedly—

“Marshal, I pray you to excuse me; one of the Imperialists at the gate is the great Count of Carlstein—his daughter is starving among us here in Stralsund,—ask him now, if for

Heaven's sake and her own, he will take her with him to the German camp."

I said this in a voice made tremulous by emotion; but I foresaw that Ernestine would have to suffer yet greater misery, if she remained among us; and I had secretly resolved, that the mere selfish gratification of enjoying her society, should not be made paramount to her health and happiness.

"I shall mention your wishes to the count," said Leslie; and his words sounded like a parting knell to me, for I was assured that we should be separated at last.

"I have done but my duty," thought I; "it were no kindness to keep her here in Stralsund."

Our marshal—whose little and somewhat decrepit figure, clad in a plain buff coat laced with silver, and who wore a white scarf of silk over his right shoulder, sustaining a basket-hilted Scottish sword, appeared to great disadvantage beside the towering figure of the count—advanced three paces from the gate, and, raising his blue bonnet, announced himself with brief formality to the visitors, adding, "You have been received somewhat differently from those cartels I lately sent towards your trenches."

"We obey but the orders of Wallenstein," replied the count, with grave brevity.

"Well, herald—what do you require of us?—I am ready to listen and reply."

In modern times, this was one of the last instances of a city being summoned by a herald; but the revival of the obsolete custom, suited the vain, splendid, and chivalric ideas of Wallenstein. This herald, who wore a tabard that blazed with embroidery (for it was charged with the bars argent and gules of Hungary; the red lion of Bohemia; the fesse of Austria; the triple tower of Castile, and all the countless quarterings of the great German empire), after coughing once or twice, took off his conical hat, and, unrolling a paper, began thus in hoarse and guttural German.

"By orders of Albrecht, Count of Wallenstein, Duke of Friedland and Mechlenburg, General of the Empire and Oceanic seas, and in the name of the most high and mighty prince, Ferdinand—"

"Oho—so your Duke puts his name before the Emperor's!" said Sir Alexander Leslie; "come—Master Herald—that is not so bad!"

Carlstein bit his lips and smiled.

"By the grace of God, Emperor of the Romans," continued the herald, reading very fast; "King of Germany, Hungary, Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Sclavonia, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Servia, and Rescia; Archduke of Austria; Duke of Burgundy, Brabant, Stiria, Carinthia, Carniola, Luxembourg, Wittemburg, and Lord of Silesia—"

"Gude guide us!" muttered the Scottish marshal.

"Marquis of the Holy Roman Empire, Burgau, and Moravia; Count of Hapsburg, the Tyrol, Ferrette, and Kiburg; Landgrave of Alsace; Lord of Portnau and Salines; I, Rudolf of Menth, Black Eagle king-of-arms, summon the burgomaster and citizens of Stralsund, with the general—"

"The burgomaster has no authority here," said Sir Alexander Leslie; "I alone command in Stralsund."

"With the general and Scottish troops of the King of Sweden, to surrender and open the gates of the said city, on the third day from this, by twelve o'clock at noon, under pain of a general assault, after which every man, woman, and child, soldier and civilian, without respect to age or rank, will be put indiscriminately and without mercy to the sword."

"I am but an unlettered soldier of fortune," replied Leslie, with a calm smile on his round and good-humoured face; "and being but an humble man, am altogether unable to send a fitting answer to the proprietor of this terrible muster-roll of hard names and barbarous titles. Do the Emperor and Duke think to frighten us with this ware? I am but the Laird, or the Graf of Balgonie (if it better suits your German lugs); yet by the orders I have received from Christian and Gustavus, the allied princes of the North, who committed this once happy and industrious city to my care, there were no provisions made a'ent treating with, or surrendering its people to the tender mercies of, the Imperial troops; therefore I am extremely sorry that I have only gunpowder and shot at the service of the Duke of Friedland. You may return and tell him so; with this additional

message, that did I act as *he* would have done, I would send you all back in salted joints, like a barrel of Fourrier's beef."

"Stout Balgonie, you say well!" said Carlstein in our own language; "by my honour, Wallenstein will find that Stralsund might as well have been slung in chains, as committed to the care of you and the brave Scots of Gustavus of Sweden."

"Count of Carlstein, you are, like myself, a cavalier of fortune, and know that we have seldom other inheritance than our fathers' swords, and know assuredly that our honour is the very breath of our nostrils. While one Scottish musketeer can stand by my side, and while one stone of Stralsund remains upon another, I will never surrender, and Wallenstein can only have the city when the last soldier and the last stone have fallen together! You have your answer, gentlemen—Herald, you may go; but, Count of Carlstein, I beg one word with you."

At these words I felt my heart beat thick and fast. For me, I thought the sun would soon set in Stralsund.

"We have among us here your eldest daughter, who is, of course, most anxious to rejoin you, though we have treated her with every kindness and care, even as if she had been my ain bairn; but we cannot foresee what new dangers a day may bring forth, and a beleaguered city is assuredly no place for women, as we know well—"

"God bless and thank you, Sir Alexander Leslie!" said the count, with a thick voice, as a change overspread his face; "if my daughters are in your charge, they could not be in better hands, and 'tis well, for receive them I cannot! Wallenstein has sworn, that until the city is surrendered, no man, woman, or child, shall leave its gates, alive or dead."

"Ye honour me, count," replied the marshal, whose native accent always waxed stronger when he became friendly or familiar; "but believe me, there are some buirdly Scottish chields here with me in Stralsund, who will deem it their greatest happiness to hae an opportunity o' shedding their best bluid in their defence."

"Bear my dearest blessing to my poor girls, and let us hope that happier times are in store for us all—adieu!" and, unwilling that his emotion should be visible before so many eyes, the

count turned abruptly away, and, stepping into the boat, was rowed, with the herald, slowly back towards the Imperial lines.

“Girls?” I repeated, as Sir Alexander re-entered by the klinket; “then he knows not that one of his daughters is no more.”

“I saw how the puir man’s heart filled, and how his eyes dimmed at the thought of his bairns,” replied the kind old marshal; “and I could not be a hard-hearted auld tyke, and bluntly tell how one had perished. Oh, no—ill news travel fast enough, gude kens!”

Such is the selfishness of love, that, notwithstanding the continued danger, privation, and discomfort, to which Ernestine was certain of being subjected, I now felt a glow of satisfaction in being assured that I could not yet be deprived of her society.

CHAPTER XLII.

RETRIBUTION.

SOME days after this, I was hastening from the Frankendör towards the residence of Ernestine, when, at a corner of the Bourse, where the merchants were wont to meet, but where the rank grass grew between the untrodden stones, I observed a provision shop, or victualler's, the last in the street, which as yet maintained the aspect of having any thing like business, which all its less fortunate neighbours had long since hopelessly abandoned.

Upon the front wall of the house, there were cut and gilded the date 1600, with one of those verses, then so common in Stralsund, recording, in barbarous Latin, that Jaromar prince of Rügen had fortified the city, after it had been burned by the Danes and Pomeranians. Half concealing this, a gaudy sign-board was nailed over it, bearing the name and occupation of the retailer, the aspect of whose stock made me remember (what I seldom forgot) the larder of Ernestine's establishment; and, being without money, I twisted a few golden links from the chain her father had given me in more prosperous times, and desiring a soldier to follow me, entered the shop, the entire goods of which consisted of three somewhat shrivelled hams, a side of suspicious-like bacon, and a few strings of freshly made, but still more suspicious sausages, the material of which, at such a time, when the marshal and burgomaster had been living for months on horse-flesh or little better, made me resolve to have nothing to do with them. But then every thing was scrupulously neat and clean; the Memel floor and counters were scrubbed to the whiteness of snow; the tin and brass work shone like silver and gold. An elderly man, with wiry grey mustaches, and wearing a nightcap and long apron of spotless white cotton, was busy

with a chopping-knife preparing more sausages, which he seasoned profusely with garlic, salt, and pepper.

He appeared considerably disconcerted on my entrance, and, despite the deference usually paid by his class and all sorts to a long mustache and long sword, he doggedly continued his occupation; but his wife, a smart little woman, with lively black eyes, and a face that was wofully ravaged by the small-pox, tripped forward to ask me what I would have.

The question had scarcely left her lips, when she grew paler than her white coif, trembled, and cast down her eyes. Her voice and her *tout ensemble* were familiar to me. I felt myself change colour in turn, and mingled emotions of pleasure, anger, and surprise ran through me.

“What a change is here!” said I; “is it possible that I find the Señora Prudentia—the sylph-like dancer, whose actions were so full of grace and beauty—the songstress who warbled like a fairy bird in summer—transformed into a little vender of sausages and ham!”

Perhaps there was something spiteful in this remark; but I had a lively recollection of the doubloons and the ring, bought from an honest jeweller of the Hebrew race in the Burgerplatz at Glückstadt.

“Herr Captain,” she replied modestly and timidly, and with an air that well became her *then*, with her plain white linen coif, her large neckerchief, and short bunchy petticoats of scarlet cloth (for every way she had fairly become the little burgher’s wife), “adversity has taught me a good lesson; I was vain, I was beautiful and wicked, and God has punished me. He sent a severe illness which robbed me of my beauty, and my vanity went with it. I should always have remembered that beauty fades like the summer, but, unlike the summer, returns no more. I shall never be beautiful again—never! (this was said with some bitterness.) I shall never sing more; for the same envious illness robbed me of my fine voice; but it matters not—I am at least content; yet *ay de mi Espana!* I shall never see Spain more. My husband——”

“What—you are then married at last!”

“My husband is an honest man, and I am become an indus-

trious little housewife. We should make quite a fortune but for this unhappy siege ; and shall we not yet, Herr Spürledter?—look up, and speak for yourself."

" Spürledter—how—is your spouse my old acquaintance, the corporal of Imperial horse?" said I with new astonishment, as that personage, on being thus compelled to show his face, doffed his white nightcap, and stood soldierly erect before me.

" I am sorry to see you here, corporal," said I ; " for if Stralsund is taken, the Imperialists will hang you as surely as the sun is shining."

Had I been less of a soldier, I am certain that the recollection of the desperate love I had once made to Prudentia would have embarrassed me ; but there was something as comical in the transformation of the wiry and ferocious old corporal of Reitres into a maker of sausages, as there was something melancholy in the change of the beautiful dancer into a plain-looking citizen's wife, with an enormous white coif, red skirt, and bunch of keys.

" And now, Herr Captain," said she with a business-like air, to cut short an unpleasant pause ; " in what can we serve you?"

" By placing your best ham in the hands of this soldier," said I, hesitatingly.

She gave me a glance of mingled archness and sadness, and lifted down the ham, while I, who once would not have allowed her to pluck a flower unaided, stood stoically by.

" We have been so shamefully plundered, Mein Herr!" said old Spürledter ; "'tis only a day since Major Fritz, that tall cavalier with the short beard, and two yellow feathers in his hat, marched off with all our best and last Bologna sausages."

" And to-day," added Prudentia with something of her old air, " another insolent biped without feathers carried away our only fowl."

" For Heaven's sake, do not be alarmed, Frau Spürledter!" I replied hastily ; " I am not foraging, as your corporal has no doubt done many a day. I require the provant ; and must have it ; but having no money, beg to leave these six links of pure gold, which are more than enough to pay for thrice my purchase. And now," I added, as the soldier marched off with it ; " I trust, Frau, you

have not, as at Glückstadt, any acquaintances beyond the walls; for I am not now the fool I was in those days."

"Fool!—oh, how can you use a term so harsh? and I am not the pretty knave I was in those days either—oh no!" she added sadly and archly. "I beseech you not to think so, and not to discover to the marshal all I have done in other times—nor to say I am the sister of—of him you know. Ah! your eyes sparkle; and I believe with reason. If you can extend protection to my husband and myself, it will be a favour—yea, it will be a mercy, which we shall do our best to merit; for in a city surrounded by ferocious besiegers, and defended by desperate and starving soldiers of fortune, the situation of the poor citizens is not very enviable."

I felt somewhat moved by the severe and complete retribution that had fallen on this once proud and artful coquette, and I promised to yield all the protection in my power. She declined to receive the golden links; but I insisted upon her doing so, and remembering, with something of awkwardness, the different relation in which we now stood to each other, and all the flowery love-speeches and magniloquent nonsense I had said to her in other times, I was in some haste to be gone, and bade her adieu.

As I issued into the Bourse, accompanied by the Highlander who bore my unsentimental purchase, which the hollow-cheeked passers beheld with eager and wolfish eyes, old Spürledter hurried after me, and raising a hand to his white nightcap in the old style of his military salute—

"Herr Captain," said he, "I believe you know what a devil of a brother-in-law I have. Well: though an old soldier who has smelt powder at Prague and Fleura, I have a mortal terror of such a relation, and despite all your guards and gates he has been twice (the Lord alone knows how) in Stralsund here, and has robbed us each time of every thaler we possessed."

"What—within Stralsund?"

"Ay, here—in Stralsund."

"This rascal must be cunning as a lynx."

"Cunning as Lucifer, Herr Captain, and more wicked withal. I have the honour to point out to you, that this reputable rela-

tion of mine is hovering like a jackal about the Imperial camp, and, as I believe you have some dark scores to settle with him, he might be lured within reach of a party, and consigned to the care of the provost-marshall."

At these words, a glow of vengeance swelled up in my breast. I thanked the ex-corporal of Reitres, and promised to call again ; but other events frustrated his kind intention of sending his troublesome brother-in-law in search of another world. With a light heart I hastened to the residence of Ernestine, yet remembering with something of shame—a shame that made my love for her the more pure and noble—my transient folly at Glückstadt.

After that day I never again saw Prudentia ; for though I was three months longer in Stralsund, I avoided the shop at the corner of the Bourse ; for I had no wish that Ian, or any of our officers or friends—especially Major Fritz—should discover in the plump little victualler, the Prudentia of my early days of soldiering—my "mysterious countess," as Karl called her in jest ; moreover, the progress and incidents of that disastrous siege soon gave me other and graver things to think of.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE JESUIT.

NONE save those who have been circumstanced as we unfortunately were, in a city besieged and reduced almost to the last extremity, can fully appreciate the value of the prize I brought with me to lay at the feet of Ernestine; but a pound of fresh meat, or a slice of plain bread, were then worth thrice their weight in gold.

When I entered her little boudoir, which the Fraü of the last occupant had furnished with exquisite taste, and hung with curtains of the richest velvet, she was kneeling at prayer, and the softness of the Turkey carpet enabled me to approach her unheard. Then I paused for a time; but her eye detected me, and she arose with a charming smile.

“ You were praying when I left you, and still you are praying! Dear Ernestine, how very bad you must be to have so much to repent of,” said I, playfully.

“ All my prayers are for my poor father and you, Philip—for your safety and for his,” replied she, with somewhat of a pouting air; “ believe me, that since I came to Stralsund I have almost forgotten how to pray for myself.”

“ Now, do not pout, dear Ernestine,” said I, clasping her head upon my breast; “ for it does not look pretty even in you, who possess the charm of that perfect innocence, without which a beautiful woman is like a rose without perfume.”

“ Now, where did you pick up this piece of poetry?”

“ Not amid the shot and smoke, the slime and slaughter, of yonder batteries; but here with you, Ernestine; for it is you, and you alone, who shed a ray of light and poetry along the dark and dangerous way I am treading.”

"And in the hope that Heaven will protect you on that way, to the end of your journey—let me say *our* journey, Philip—I pray so often."

"Heaven," said I caressing her, "will never be so cruel as to separate two hearts that love each other as ours do."

"Oh, Philip! I have heard Father Ignatius say, that excess of earthly love excludes the love of heaven, which thereby becomes incensed, and sends death as a terrible mentor to those who forget it."

I was about to make some jesting protest against this theory of our old friend, when a knock was given at the door, and the red visage and redder beard of Gillian M'Bane, one of our musketeers, appeared; and after many apologies he informed me, that a patrol of the guard at the Frankendör had taken a prisoner, who incessantly asked for me, and that Ian Dhu required my presence immediately.

Reluctantly I left Ernestine, and taking my sword with me (for I remembered the vicinity of Bandolo), piloted my way in the evening twilight to the Frankendör. From the description of "the prisoner," given to me by Gillian, *viz.*—a tall, lantern-jawed man, with high cheekbones, black hair, and bald head, keen eyes, and sallow visage, with a long ungainly figure enveloped in a black cassock buttoned up to his chin, I had little doubt that he would prove no other than Father Ignatius; and, by part of a conversation which I overheard while descending the steep stair towards the bastion gate, I learned that my suspicions were right.

"You afford no sufficient explanation for prowling close to the walls," I heard the Baron Karl say, as he and Ian stood forward from among a group of our Highlanders, one of whom held up a lantern to the prisoner's face; "but say at once for what purpose you came here?"

"To preach the religion of God, even as Colomanus the Scot, who converted the pagans of Austria, and Arゴbastus the Scot, who baptized those of Strasburg, preached when they came here before me in other times."

"Bravo!" thought I; "it *is* Father Ignatius."

"Your religion," said Karl laughing; "and what are you?"

"A poor and unworthy brother of the order of Jesus," he replied, bowing his head at the name.

"Oho—a Jesuit!" continued Karl, in his impudent way; "so that is the trade you follow?"

"Mein Herr, I follow the commands of God—the Master of all. Sir," said he, suddenly turning to Ian, "I am a Scotsman, a countryman of your own, and indeed, sir, merit not this rough handling."

"A Scotsman!" reiterated Ian; "why the deuce did you not say so before? Enter then, and, Imperialist though ye be, here is the hand, and there the sword, that will stretch on the heather the first foreign churl that molests you."

"But your patrol had no right to seize me. In deep reverie, and pondering over many things, but chiefly on a sermon I was to preach to-morrow, I stumbled near your gates, but with no intention of espying your works, believe me. I repeat, sirs, ye have no right to seize me—I belong to God, and not to man. I belong neither to Wallenstein nor Tilly—to Christian nor Gustavus—I serve heaven and not earth——"

"Calm yourself, reverend sir," said I, approaching and taking him by the hand; "make way, gentlemen—'tis my friend, Father Ignatius, brother of my old preceptor, Dominie Daidle of Cromartie; one to whom I owe a reprieve from an unjust and shameful death."

A kind smile spread over his usually grim visage as I led him away, and he explained to me the circumstances of his capture, and how he had narrowly escaped being sent to enjoy the company of those glorious martyrs and old Scottish missionaries on whom his mind was constantly dwelling, and of whom his friend, Father Robert Strachan of Dundee, was preparing, as he told me, to give the world a history so ample, in his *Germania Christiana*. A musket-shot had been sent through the crown of his shovel-hat, and as such chapeaux were somewhat scarce in Stralsund, he contemplated the orifice with a rueful aspect, as he smoothed down the well-worn nap with his threadbare cuff.

During this, perceiving a half-starved little girl shivering in the doorway of a deserted house, the good but eccentric man (in imitation, I suppose, of St. Martin, when he rent his military

cloak in twain, and divided it with a poor devil whom he met in the streets of Rome) tore off the long skirt of his cassock, spread it over the shoulders of the wanderer, and then stalked on beside me, looking altogether, with his long lean body in the short fragment of his garment and tight serge breeches, as remarkable and absurd as when he appeared before Ernestine in the drummer's doublet at Eckernförd.

I took him first to the residence of Ernestine, who had a sincere friendship for him, notwithstanding all his uncouth eccentricity; but, having much to relate, I will only rehearse briefly the news he gave us from the Imperial camp.

The losses endured by the troops of Wallenstein, he stated, were frightful; their trenches were now mere graves, where hecatombs of slain lay buried; but hordes of barbarian soldiers were pouring to his banner from Croatia, Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Upper Austria, so that severe and disastrous work was yet before us.

Bandolo had been lurking about the Imperial camp, coming abroad only in the night when, like a wolf or jackal, he prowled about those places where he could plunder the unburied dead; and, though fired at repeatedly, he had always escaped. A week ago, the regiment of Merodé had joined, and having marched through Hesinge, had there learned the whole story of Gabrielle's terrible fate. Colonel Johan de Vart (or Wert), a reckless soldier, on whom Carlstein had bestowed many favours, then challenged Merodé to single combat with rapier and pistols, on horseback, before the tent of Wallenstein. After a furious combat, the colonel ran the count fairly through the heart; and thus perished the primary cause of poor Gabrielle's death, but the actual perpetrator yet remained to be taken. By beat of drum Carlstein had offered three thousand ducats to any man who would bring Bandolo before him, dead or alive; Wallenstein had offered as much more from his own purse; Major-general Arnhem had added a thousand, and Camargo five hundred, thus a vast sum was now set on the head of the assassin, whom Count Tilly could no longer protect even if he was disposed to do so. The cupidity of a hundred thousand men had been excited by the proffered reward, and Bandolo had been hunted from one hiding-place to another. For three days he had lurked among

some rocks and woods near Hohendorf, where the count in person, with three squadrons of his Reitres, had tracked him like a wolf; and with these three squadrons he had once maintained a running fight for six hours. He was almost naked; in his superhuman exertions to elude pursuit, by rushing from rock to tree, and from tree to rock, his clothing had been torn to shreds, and little more remained than the belt and pouch of ammunition which supplied his murderous carbine. He did terrible execution among the count's Reitres! Concealing himself at one time behind a rock, at another behind a bush, or among the furze and long grass, he hovered within gunshot, and picked off the leading troopers, until terrified by the havoc committed by his single arm, and by the miraculous manner in which he escaped their shots, as if he was bullet-proof; and, moreover, finding the perfect impracticability of pursuing in their heavy accoutrements a half nude and wholly desperate man, who was strong as a lion, active as a lynx, and determined to die rather than be taken alive, Carlstein's Reitres had been compelled, but reluctantly, to relinquish the chase, and thus Bandolo had escaped.

"*Escaped!*" I exclaimed, and started to my feet; "ah! if I, with only six of our fleet Highland mountaineers, had been there, a different story had been told."

"Well, he escaped, and none save myself know to where; for he sent me a message by a poor Franciscan yesterday, that he was concealed in a cavern of the isle of Rügen, which is now almost desolate; for Wallenstein's Croats have poured over it like a fiery scourge, driving all the inhabitants into the sea."

"You are sure he is there, sir?"

"Sure as that I now address you," continued the Jesuit, from whom I concealed the fierce exultation that arose within my breast; "but he will soon be discovered, and may Heaven, through the intercession of one more worthy than me, grant him that contrition and forgiveness for the horrors of his past life, which I—by falling into the hands of your very unceremonious patrol—am unable to afford him."

"And would you really have gone to him?" I asked with unfeigned astonishment.

"Bandolo has an immortal soul, as well as yourself, Captain

Rollo ; and had he slain my own father (and, Heaven knoweth, I loved little Gabrielle like a daughter of my own), it would have been but my duty to visit him when summoned on such an errand."

" What errand ? " said I, drawing the buckle of my belt with impatience.

" He believed himself to be dying ; and, if free and unfettered, on what plea could I withhold the last sacrament from a repentant sinner—one in *articulo mortis*, as he most probably is."

" And he is lurking "—

" In a cavern of the rocky isle of Rugen—poor wretch ! "

I turned away, lest the simple-hearted priest should read the dark thoughts that flitted through my mind ; for he thought that in Rugen, Bandolo was as safe from those in Stralsund, as if he had been among the Norwegian Alps. All that long and terrible debt of vengeance, which time and atrocity had scored up between us, seemed now on the point of being paid off. In the keen exultation of the time, I had only one fear—that Bandolo might die ere I could reach him. Some may deem this sentiment revengeful and unchristian ; but let me remind them that Stralsund was not then the school wherein to learn the Christian virtues.

Concealing my future intentions under a mild exterior, after we left Ernestine, and when we walked through the streets towards the house of our preacher, where I intended to billet Father Ignatius, I acquired every necessary information about the isle of Rugen. There were no Imperialists there now ; the few inhabitants who had not been shot or driven into the sea, lurked in their half-ruined villages ; and the cavern occupied by Bandolo lay among some rocks that overhung the Black Lake, near Stnbbenkamer. Poor Father Ignatius, in the perfect simplicity of his heart, gave me all the information I required.

Already, in imagination, I saw Bandolo in his cavern ! I could reach it blindfolded ! These little details occupied me until we reached the billet of our regimental minister, the Reverend Mr. Gideon Geddes, to whom the burgomaster had carefully assigned one of the most comfortable, and (so far as cannon-balls were concerned) least exposed houses in Stralsund.

To him I introduced Father Ignatius, whom he welcomed

with a sour smile, and after measuring him from top to toe with his eye, as if he was examining an adversary, invited him to partake of the supper which his servant was just then spreading on the table. I now bade their reverences adieu, and went in search of Phadrig Mhor.

I should have remembered that good and true, though homely adage, "concerning two of a trade," who seldom agree; and that our preacher's billet, though the largest house in Stralsund, was still not large enough to contain two such spirits as Father Ignatius, a follower of Loyola, and the Reverend Gideon Geddes, who had studied divinity at the ancient university of Glasgow. A tremendous explosion of polemics was the result!

The Reverend Gideon, a hard-featured, short-nosed and wiry-haired little man, with eyes like a Skye terrier, stiffly starched bands, and a sable cloak of the newest Geneva cut, was unguarded enough, in the very middle of supper, to make some caustic remarks concerning the absurdity of Lent and saints' festivals.

Father Ignatius defended both from Scripture.

The Reverend Gideon retorted by averring that the devil might quote Scripture; but that the church of Rome could never stand before the Bible, and that the triple-headed beast, which arose from the gates of hell, would soon be hurled behind them.

Irritated by this, Father Ignatius swelled up in his skirtless cassock, and told our chaplain that he was a blasphemous wretch, a preacher of heresy, a broken reed, and so forth—one who railed at a church which would yet overshadow the earth.

"Nay, nay," said our preacher, with a grin; "for lo you now! There riseth a tide which, from the shores of the Baltic, will flow to the Adriatic, and in its passage that tide shall sweep away Rome and its corruption. The force of opinion, and the valour of Gustavus and his host, will bear all before them. All the world knoweth that the crimes of the Cæsars, of Nero, Tiberius, and Heliogabalus, were as purity and innocence when compared to those of Pope Stephen and many of his successors, down to him who was the father of the Duke of Valentinois and Lucrezia Borgia."

"Wretch!" replied the Jesuit, "I only pray that Heaven may

spare you to repent this blasphemy, or permit you by your invincible ignorance to escape the flames of the great abyss."

"Jesuit—I need no man's prayers," replied the sturdy Presbyterian, snapping his fingers; "my ain are enough, and may be mair than enough for my purpose—but a Jesuit's—feich!"

"Sir," said the priest proudly, "the order of Jesus are the best soldiers of the church of Rome!"

"Likely enough," retorted Gideon; "for it's a kirk that's been unco fond of war of late."

Then arming himself with the famous folio Bible of Andro Hart of Edinburgh, and Calvin's *Commentaries*, he returned to the charge against Lent and images, and assailed poor Father Ignatius with such vigour and vituperation, and with such a noisy storm of hard Hebrew names, that he had great difficulty in keeping his ground; for our preacher was one of those clever fellows who take care to keep all the argument to themselves. At this crisis, when the battle was at the fiercest, a file of the quarter-guard were sent by Major Fritz, who separated the angry disputants, and conveyed the Jesuit to his own billet, at the house of the widow.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE BLACK LAKE OF STUBBENKAMER.

WITHOUT asking permission (for I knew that at such a time it would not be acceded to me), I selected Phadrig Mhor, and six of our musketeers who were western islemen, and consequently accustomed to boating; and having procured a long, light, and sharp boat (one of the many that lay moored and now unclaimed beside the deserted mole), we pulled softly out into the Sound, and, favoured by the obscurity of the night, passed undiscovered between the gallies and gun-barges of Wallenstein.

My men were all McDonalds, and were stout and active as mountain deer; they were all armed with sword and pistol, dirk and musket, and had left their plaids and all their heavier trappings behind them.

We pulled straight across, towards the rocky isle of Rugen, which is indented by innumerable bays and inlets, so that we had no fear of finding a place wherein to conceal our boat. This island, which is one of the largest in the Baltic, and was famous of old for the bravery and valour of its inhabitants, the Rugii, who worshipped the barbarous idol Hertha, rose in dusky and broken outline ahead, as the twinkling lights of Stralsund sank in the midnight mist astern.

My sturdy Celts soon shot their light boat across the narrow Sound; we ran it into a small creek, which lay a few hundred yards to the left of the landing-place near Oldevehr, and there concealed it among the thick underwood that overhung the rocks.

Ascending the narrow and now untrodden pathway that led directly to Bergen, the little capital which lies nearly in the centre of the isle, we struck off immediately, by a road which Father Ignatius had described to me, as leading to the lurking-place of Bandolo, and which, though a small and obscure track,

my followers, to whom I imparted my purpose and all the bearings of the place, found with the instinct of true Highland foresters.

This island, where in after years our regiment achieved one of its most brilliant victories, measures about thirty miles each way; but so deeply are its rocky shores embayed by the sea, that no part can be further than three miles from the shore. Ruden, a little islet now lying in der Rugsiche Bodden, and anciently a part of it, was rent from the mainland by a tempest in the fourteenth century, when the sea burst through the isthmus, and formed a deep channel, through which the largest vessels can sail. The centre of the isle was so fruitful, that it was called the Granary of Stralsund, but now it was all desolate; the cattle and horses had been shot or carried off; the fields lay untilled; the farm-houses were burned or otherwise destroyed; and all the inhabitants had fled to Pomerania, save a few miserable beings who lurked in the half-ruined town of Bergen, or Gingst, a village of linen-weavers, or Arcona, where on a stupendous rock there stands an ancient castle of the Vandals, containing the temple of their four-headed god, Sivantevite, in whose service were kept three hundred horses of spotless white; and whose worship was abolished by Waldemar of Denmark, when he conquered the island in 1168.

Aided by the rising moon, and guided by the landmarks, having frequently studied, during leisure hours at Stralsund, an old map of Pomerania and its islands, drawn by the geographer Ortelius, I led my party directly to that part of Rugen in which Father Ignatius had given me reason to believe Bandolo was lurking, like one of those wild wolves whose baying broke at times upon the solemn stillness of the midnight sky.

Unseen and in silence, we passed various little hamlets, such as Casnevitz on the right, Landau on the left, and Bergen, which lay fifteen miles distant from Stralsund, and was then diminished to about a hundred houses. By one of the country people (who speak a species of Sclavonian) we were directed to turn round the angle of a bay which lay on our left; the waves of the sea were dashing on our right, and we threaded our way along a narrow granite ridge, which leads to the wooded peninsula of

Jasmünde, the northern extremity of which was that remarkable chalky cliff, six hundred feet high above the sea—the Stubbenkamer, the highest peak of which is named the Kœningstuhl, or King's-chair. We had now reached the north-east point of the isle, and were more than four-and-twenty miles from Stralsund. The hour was about two in the morning; and thus, thanks to our sturdy limbs and thews, we had got over a devious and difficult route in an incredibly short space of time.

Before us lay a wooded valley covered by dense timber, and darkened by the richest foliage. This was the forest of Jasmünde, which supplied all Rügen with fuel. Beyond it rose the headland called the cape of Stubbenkamer, against whose base of rock the Baltic rolled its waves; and between us and the moon, like a deep basin girdled in by the wooded hills, lay the *Black Lake*, overlooked by the cavern which, as the Jesuit had assured me, was occupied by Bandolo, and lay directly *opposite* the path by which we approached its bank.

“Softly now, Phadrig,” said I; “we are right upon the trail of the wolf; keep under the foliage, for although the lake is a quarter of a mile broad, he may detect us by the light of that beautiful moon.”

“Some one has passed this way but a short time ago,” said Phadrig, who was on his knees, examining like a Highland huntsman, the pathway which was covered with grass.

“Ah!—and in what direction?” I asked.

“Towards the water; for in that way the pressure lies, and the leaves and twigs on each side are tossed in that direction.”

“You have sharp eyes, Phadrig! can you detect any thing more?”

“Only, that the footmarks are those of a man by their weight and size.”

“Good—we are on the scent, then!”

“A barefooted man,” added one of our soldiers; “see, Sergeant Mhor M'Farquhar, the blades of grass are neither broken nor cut by brogue nor boot, but just pressed flat.”

“Eachin M'Donuil is right, sir,” said Phadrig, erecting his tall figure; “and moreover,” he added, sinking his voice, “at every

second footmark there is the angular indent of a musket-butt. I will therefore say that the man has been armed, barefooted, and weary, and leaned on his gun as he walked towards the loch side; but there we lose the track."

"He has either swum over, or gone round by the water-side," said I, "for the cave lies opposite."

By stooping down, we could perceive under the dark brow of a wooded cliff, and close to the water, a darker spot, which we had no doubt was the identical and primitive habitation we were in search of.

"Let us separate," said Phadrig; "I will go round by the left, with Eachin M'Donuil and his brother; if you, Captain Rollo, will take the right, with their two comrades."

"Very good, Phadrig, and we will steal softly towards the cavern, which must be our meeting-place. Look once more to your muskets and powder—be wary, as if you were tracking a wild bull by the shores of Lochindall or the Mull of O'e at home in Isla—and every man of you shall have a piece of gold to string at his bonnet-lug for this night's work, and more."

We separated, and, diving into the coppice, crept stealthily round the lake, pausing frequently to listen to any passing sound; but all was still as the grave. Over the bare scalp of the Stubbenkamer, the cold white moonlight streamed into the silent and wooded hollow, silvering the leaves, and the still, waveless surface of the lake. Not a branch stirred, for the wind was breathless, and the fleecy clouds were floating unmoved in the wide blue sky.

As we crept round with panther-like steps, and with that noiseless motion which the foresters of the Highland woods naturally acquired, like the Indians of America, by their habits of war and hunting, my mind was fully occupied by the anticipation of capturing Bandolo, and meting out upon his head the punishment which his life of atrocity so well merited, and which I believed no human hand could make sufficiently severe, there recurred to me a story (concerning this very lake in the wood of Jasmünde) which I remembered to have read in Cluverius; and which, if I had related it to my followers, might have put them all to flight; for although they were fellows who would have

faced Satan himself by daylight, the same personage in the dark was quite another matter.

Cluverius asserts that this Black Lake is of wondrous depth; that it is bottomless; and, though teeming with fish, is the abode of demons, who will not permit either boats to swim on its surface, or nets to sink into its waters, which, like the wood around them, were sacred to the goddess Hertha, and her brother Nikelas, on whose altars the early Christians were yearly sacrificed. Cluverius relates, that in his own time some of the Rugii brought a boat to the lake, one evening, and returned next day with the intention of fishing; but, lo! to their astonishment, it had disappeared. After a long search, the boat was discovered, thrown on the top of one of the most gigantic beech-trees, and dangling far beyond their reach. As they shrunk back, they muttered one to another—

“ ‘Tis the devils of the Stubbenkamer who have done this!”

“ *It was not the devils*,” cried a terrible voice from the bosom of the lake; “ *but only my brother Nikelas and I.*”

“ We can only suppose,” adds Cluverius, “ that the unclean spirits, being wroth at the abolition of their worship, still love to play their tricks where idolatry was practised of old.”

After considerable labour in piercing the thick barriers of tangled briers, furze, and roots of old and decayed trees, that encircled the lake, but shrouded from Bandolo’s eye by the foliage with which our dark green tartans blended, crawling on our hands and knees, and dragging our muskets after us, we softly approached the low brow of rock that overhung the water, and in the face of which there yawned a cavern, having a mouth like some low rustic arch, against the piers of which the water chafed in tiny ripples; but the recesses of which probably pierced the profundity of the Stubbenkamer.

A sound like the croak of a crow announced to us, that our comrades were within pistol-shot on the opposite side; a M’Donald replied by another sound like the whirr of a partridge, these being the signals agreed upon. Suddenly a wild and haggard figure came forth from the chasm. It was Bandolo—the assassin of Gabrielle!

My breath came thick and fast, and I heard the click of locks

as my men cocked their muskets. We were within twenty feet of him, yet he saw us not. He leaned with his hands crossed and his chin resting on the muzzle of a long Spanish musket, which I thus supposed to be unloaded. He was pale and ghastly ; for wounds, want, fatigue, and danger, had wrought their worst upon him. His coal-black hair hung in matted elf-locks around his neck, and over his eyes and ears ; a thick beard bristled on his chin ; his hollow and glistening eye gazed with a wild and unsettled expression, alternately on the sailing moon, and the deep still waters of the placid lake. He was almost nude, having nothing upon him but the tattered remains of a shirt and a pair of breeches. His brown and muscular arms and legs, from knee downwards, were bare ; his breast was also bare, save where crossed by the belt of a cartridge pouch, and the fluttering rags of what had been a shirt. He was the very personification of a hunted wild beast—of a devil cast out from the society of devils—or of what he was, a wretch against whom all men had lifted up their hands, and whose hands were uplifted against all men.

One of my soldiers blew his match, and the red glow caught Bandolo's haggard eye. He uttered a growl, snatched his musket, and, rushing on one side, was confronted by the towering figure of Phadrig Mhor, with his Lochaber axe upraised, and the barrels of two muskets levelled right at his head.

Gnashing his teeth with rage and astonishment, he uttered a bitter curse, and turned to the other side, between the lake and rocks, but was there met by the brass orb of my target, my uplifted claymore, and two musket-barrels also levelled straight at his head. Uttering a howl of wrath and fury, he made a motion as if to leap into the lake, and then, changing his intention, rushed into the cavern ; and now we were somewhat puzzled, for we knew not the depth or the windings of the place, from the recesses of which he might easily shoot us all down by his deadly aim if we entered ; for the reflection of the moon from the lake would enable him to fire with terrible precision while we could not give him back a shot in return.

There was a pause. Eachin M'Donuil stooped down and fired into the cavern at random ; at the same moment a ball from

Bandolo grazed his head, and the double report reverberated among the woods and in the far recesses of the granite rocks in which the fissure yawned.

“Dia! this will never do,” said the islesman, as he drew back to reload; “it is always darkest under a lamp. We may be within arm’s length of this fellow, and yet not see him.”

“Let us all rush in,” said I; “he cannot knock us all on the head. Come, my boys! with a good cause and a day’s pay one may face the devil!”

But they were too wary; and, brave as they were, drew back, saying—

“And if *you* are shot, Captain Rollo, who will tell the marshal why we left Stralsund?”

I was somewhat at a loss how to proceed, for to besiege Bandolo in the cavern and starve him out, would be a tedious and dangerous process; as we would have to starve ourselves in the first place, and run the risk of being killed or captured if any of the Imperialists paid the isle a visit from the Duke of Fried-land’s camp; but Phadrig and our four M'Donalds were well versed in all the tactics of mountain warfare, and prepared at once to *smoke* him out. While two kept guard with their muskets cocked, the others hewed down a quantity of decayed wood, and hurled over bundles of withered grass and the last year’s leaves. In the midst of these I threw a flaming match, ignited by snapping a musket; the leaves, grass, and branches, shot up into a flame, and upon that flame we threw a vast number of branches freshly hewn from pine-trees. Phadrig continued to cleave down the resinous boughs and green saplings, and these, which were to smoulder, were mingled with drier branches to burn, thus the fire and smoke rapidly increased together. As they rose, they were caught by the arch of the fissure, into which they were rolled by a west wind that blew across the Black Lake.

The wooded amphitheatre, of which its placid waters seemed to form the arena, glowed in light; the leaves of the distant trees reddened in the gleam, and a long line of wavering fire streamed from the narrow rocks across the bosom of the lake, whose woods and waters were all unchanged, as when the priests of Hertha raised their flaming altars by its wild sequestered shore.

The M'Donalds continued this work in grim silence, which they interrupted only by a low and fierce remark in Gaëlic; for these four men were the sole survivors of the clan Donald of Eigg, nearly the whole of whom were smoked to death in a great cavern by M'Lean of that Ilk.*

I now applied my sword to the work, and hewed away with right good-will, heaping branches of every kind upon the flame below us; the rocks soon became blackened, and the flame, as it licked their granite faces, scorched off the grass and flowers. The smoke rapidly became a dark volume, stifling even to ourselves, and now day began to dawn on the bare scalp of the Kœningstuhl.

For nearly an hour the fire had burned, and Phadrig was beginning to express fears that Bandolo was no longer *in* the cavern, but had escaped by some secret outlet; when, lo! I heard a wild and despairing cry, followed by the discharge of two muskets, and, escaping both, Bandolo darted out of his lurking-place, scattering the blazing brands with his bare feet; and with his eyes starting from their sockets, his face pale as fear, fury, and wrath could make it, his long black hair streaming on the wind, his long musket brandished aloft, butt uppermost, burst out through the smoke and flame, and with a thousand red sparks adhering to his hair and tattered garments, fled like a dun deer up the side of the wooded hill.

Unwearied by our long march from Oldevehr, and being refreshed by the halt at the cavern mouth, and the cool morning air, we sprang away in pursuit, dashing up the ascent like true mountaineers, or like the Luath and Bran of other times. Bandolo frequently paused and staggered round to fire a shot at whoever chanced to be foremost in pursuit; but whenever he halted, we either threw ourselves flat among the long rank grass, or darted behind the nearest tree, for the mossy trunks of the firs and ashes grew thickly on the sides of the Kœningstuhl.

As we followed him in a half circle, keeping about a hundred yards apart, and thus forming a radius of six hundred yards, he soon found the impossibility of outflanking us on either side;

* Their bones may still be seen, strewing the floor of this cavern in Eigg, one of the Western isles.

and had to abandon what was evidently his wish, to descend again towards that wooded hollow from whence we had driven him. He was now compelled to continue his flight towards the Koenigstuhl, whose bare chalky scalp we could perceive above us, gilded by the rising sun, as we left the woods behind, and pursued this frantic and desperate man to the very summit of the mountain, which, being hewn into two halves by some mighty convulsion of nature, has formed an abrupt precipice above the chafing waves, and is named the Stubbenkamer—or most northern promontory of Rugen. Before him lay the wide expanse of the Baltic ocean, gleaming in purple and yellow, as the sun arose from its shining waters, then dotted by many a distant sail, bearing away towards the far-off gulfs of Finland and Bothnia. At his feet yawned an abyss, where the waves foamed on the reefs of chalky rock, and behind were six strong and active men, all armed to the teeth, and bent on his destruction.

Poor wretch! on every side was death, and in his heart—despair!

There were neither remedy, succour, hope, nor escape—and now, like a famished or hunted wolf, he turned and faced us at the verge of the precipice. Wild, ferocious, strong, and athletic, blackened and scorched by the fire through which he had passed—he stood, like a naked Hercules, with his muscular figure towering in full relief against the brightness of that orient morning sky which spread behind him.

As we approached him all our muskets were empty, and my men were deliberately reloading. His we knew to be loaded, and he was examining the lock and priming as we drew near. He was a deadly shot, and out of six of us *one* was certain to fall. I had no doubt that his last bullet was meant for me; so I covered my breast with my light Highland target as we advanced, resolving, at all risks, to rush upon him sword in hand whenever I came near enough. Instead of levelling his musket against us, he placed the butt upon the ground and the muzzle under his chin—

“ Ha—ha!” said he in a husky voice; “ did you think of taking Bandolo alive? My hour is come—all is confused and terrible! see—there are other men among you—and women too

—dim shadows, with glaring eyes and bosoms gashed by pistol shots and dagger wounds! (he passed his hand over his eyes.) Ha, ha, ha! 'tis all a dream—I rave. Look upon my sufferings—these wasted arms, these tattered rags—these hollow cheeks, these wounds and bruises—these scorched and blackened scars! Gloat upon them even as I would have gloated upon your confusion, shame, and agony in an hour like this; but Bandolo eludes you thus in death, as in life he has eluded thousands!"

He touched the trigger with his foot—shot himself through the head, and fell whizzing through the air into the abyss below.

At the moment he did this, we were almost within arm's-length of him; and never, until my own hour comes, shall I forget the terrible expression of his ghastly face, and the convulsed heaving of his vast chest and shoulders. We peered over the giddy verge, where, five hundred feet below, the white-edged waves were chafing on the chalky beach; but we could see no trace of the wretched suicide.

And yet, strange though it may appear, he did not then die.

Three days afterwards, Sir Nickelas Valdemar, when cruising off the Stübbenkamer, perceived the body of a man lying upon the beach, and sent a boat's crew ashore; and Bandolo (though the sailors knew him not) was found by them with life still lingering in his shattered frame. But what was his condition?

The ball, which entered his chin, had passed out through his nose, by the angle at which he held his head; thus no vital part was injured. The sea refused to drown him, and had flung him back upon the shelving shore, and there, with his shattered head and broken limbs, he lay naked and slowly dying, for the powers of life were wonderfully tenacious within him. The seagulls and cormorants had sat upon his breast, and torn the flesh from his face, and the hair from his temples, yet he could not resist them. Swarms of insects had buzzed about his wounds, and inserted their suckers, till the spray of the ocean washed them off, and left its bitter salt to render sharper yet the gnat and hornet's sting.

We are left to imagine the despairing cries he may have uttered to God for pity, and to man for help—cries heard only by the wild and the flitting seabirds; we are left to imagine the

burning thirst that must have scorched his vitals, and the complication of agony endured by him from so many wounds and sores; and, greater yet than all, the scorpion's sting of wakened conscience, that, like boiling lead, and falling drop by drop upon his breast, must have tortured his dying hours—for they were many.

Why pursue further this revolting description of the wrath and retribution exercised by fate upon his miserable frame? Blind, for the gulls had torn his eyes from their sockets; maimed, for his limbs had been shattered by falling into the shallow water; tortured to madness by thirst, by the reptiles and salt that festered together in his wounds—he was found by the sailors of Sir Nickelas, who could only survey him with horror and astonishment, as he lay dying and despairing with his battered frame partly merged in the rippling water.

One, less feeling than his companions, stirred Bandolo with an oar, and he immediately expired. Then a shot was attached to his heels, and, dragged off the shelf of rock by a boat-hook, the body was immediately buried in the sea.

It was not for some months after this, that I learned this terrible sequel to the story of his fate, and to our adventure on the Stubbenkamer.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE BLACK PLAGUE.

BELIEVING that Bandolo had perished at the moment he disappeared over the Stubbenkamer, we descended the Kœningstuhl, and took the direct road along the granite isthmus towards Bergen, which we reached about mid-day, and where we were hospitably entertained by the burgomaster, who was very friendly to us, as foes of the Imperialists; for Bogislaus IV., Duke of Pomerania and Rugen, was in alliance with the northern kings. As the duke's vassal, he considered it his duty to show us every attention, and procured us a waggon, drawn by two stout horses, by which we travelled towards the Sound. I took care that the night should be set in before we reached Oldevehr, for the narrow strait was full of Austrian gunboats.

In the creek, we found our little shallop still safe in its concealment, and, embarking, put forth before the moon rose, and reached the mole of Stralsund in safety; but to find that we had now to encounter another and more terrible foe than starvation or the Imperialists.

A pestilence, like unto that terrible *Black Plague* which desolated Denmark in the thirteenth century, and carried off two-thirds of the inhabitants, committing irreparable injury on its agriculture and commerce, a pestilence now conducted by starvation and misery, by excitement, grief, and poverty, and by the terrible malaria arising from the slime of the wet ditches, the sluices of which had been destroyed by the Austrian artillery, and increased by the fetid atmosphere of the shallow trenches, where Wallenstein had buried vast numbers of his slain to windward of the city—for so I may call it, from the long prevalence of the wind in one direction—a pestilence that assailed

the old and the young, the active and the listless, the brave soldiers who manned the ramparts, and the timid citizens who lurked in their cellars to avoid the bursting bombs and passing cannon-shot, had now broken out in Stralsund, to increase the troubles, the anxieties, and the already manifold dangers of the siege.

In one day this terrible epidemic had seized on more than fifty persons. Next day there were a hundred victims. No pen can convey an adequate idea of the terror of the Stralsunders. The upper classes, however, comforted themselves that the pest confined itself as yet to the lower—those poor, haggard, and wretched beings, whom lack of raiment, work, and food, made their shattered frames, like those of the drunken and the dissipated, most liable to infection.

In three days it spread so fast that three hundred perished. Many rushed to schnaps and corn-brandy to drown their cares and apprehensions; and those unhappy wretches, in a state of madness and intoxication, were frequently seen rushing, half nude, from the lower purlieus of the city, pale, wan, and ghastly, or livid and yellow as oranges, uttering shrieks of blasphemy and lewdness; and making us shudder at the thought of the terrible scenes enacted in the dens from whence they had come. Into these places our men were reluctant to penetrate to bury the dead, many of whom we knew to be lying uncoffined and unshrouded. But the orders of the marshal were not to be resisted. Men were required to volunteer for the burial service as for a forlorn hope, and liberal supplies of corn-brandy were given to those who did so. Colonel Dübbecke's Dutchmen, immovable and phlegmatic fellows, had this duty luckily assigned to them. Deep trenches were dug outside the Frankendör, and into these the dead (many of whom were worn to mere skeletons by famine and sickness) were flung over each other, pell-mell, old men and little children, side by side, and there we covered them up, shovelling great piles of earth, stones, and rubbish over them.

This malignant pest soon spread into our own ranks, and terrible havoc it made among our brave Highlanders. This was soon perceptible by the diminution of our numbers; for every

company, as it came to its post at the Frankendör, lacked an officer, a sergeant, and ten, fifteen, or twenty of its files. The churches were turned into hospitals, where, with no other bedding than straw and their plaids, our soldiers lay side by side, and dying fast from lack of sufficient medical attendance; and being rendered—by their previous scanty food, the low and foggy atmosphere, the putrid effluvia of the German trenches, the malaria of our own stagnant ditches—peculiarly liable to attack, and less able to resist it.

The chief of our medical staff, Dr. Pennicuik of that Ilk, was of more service than twenty of the Danish doctors; while it was pleasing to see the Rev. Gideon Geddes and Father Ignatius emulating each other, and working side by side like good Samaritans among the sick and dying; yet not so oblivious of their former polemics, as to resist the opportunity of firing an occasional shot at each other, over the very corpse of some poor fellow, whose spirit had eluded both their kind efforts to detain him here. Stralsund became a mere charnel-house; now it was that I trembled for Ernestine, and wished her in the Imperial camp—any where but within those walls, which engirt so much suffering, and so many new miseries, in addition to those caused by scarcity of food, and the cannonading by land batteries and gun-boats on the Sound. I was reluctant, and terrified to enter her presence, lest I should convey that pestilence for which I had no fear personally, and the cautions I gave were countless. When not on duty, Phadrig Mhor and Gillian M'Bane were installed as a *garde du corps*, and occupied the lower story of the house, with orders to bar ingress to all under pain of death; but now none came hither; for Father Ignatius had the good sense to remain away, and Ian Dhu never came nearer the door than the garden plot, where he was wont to converse for a few minutes, and then retire, for no entreaty of Ernestine could make him enter.

One forenoon, when the frowsy November fog was rising like a veil from the face of the beleaguered city, I had come off guard at the Frankendör. Culraigie's company had relieved mine, which I dismissed to their comfortless billets in the market-place, and then hurried, as was my wont, to inquire for Ernestine. I observed that the gate of the garden stood wide open;

that the house door was ajar, and that all the blinds in front were still drawn closely down, although the noon was approaching. A pang of terror shot through me, for usually the gate and door were kept shut, and at such an hour the blinds were always drawn up, and the smiling face of Ernestine was the first object that greeted me. But on this morning the blinds remained motionless, and no face was smiling there.

I rushed into the vestibule, and found M'Bane fast asleep on a bench. The poor fellow was exhausted.

"Gillian, thou glaiket gilly," said I; "how and where is the young lady?"

"Where?"

"Yes—where? Must I prick you with my skene-dhu? Where is she?"

"Gone to the hospital."

"*Hospital!*" I gasped as if a ball had passed through my heart; "to the great church opposite the Bourse?"

"Yes, captain—a poor gilly like me could never gainsay that—"

I rushed through the streets, on my way passing two carts laden with the dead who had died over-night—pale, frightful, and emaciated remains; but decently covered by a pall of white linen cloth. These were on their way to the trenches, and were surrounded by a half-intoxicated party of Dubbelstein's musketeers, armed only with shovels and mattocks. On one of those carts lay the body of Major Fritz, which, as a mark of respect, had been rolled up in one of the blankets of his bed, and was tied in three places with rough cord. Poor Fritz! even his widow's doubloons, her dinners and her wine (when others had none), could not save him from the pest. Reaching the church, I entered for the first time the abode of more mental and bodily suffering than I (devoutly) hope it may ever be my lot to see again. It presented a complication of all that was terrible and revolting.

Our soldiers lay in rows: a few on pallets, a few on trusses of straw, but many more on the cold pavement, which bore the long German epitaphs and polished brasses of the men of other times. There were patients in all stages of this putrid and ma-

lignant fever—from him who was merely affected by premonitory pains in the head, and the throbbing of the temporal artery, to him whose bloodshot eyes were red as living coals, who had the hissing of serpents in his ears, whose breath was but a succession of laborious sighs, whose swollen tongue was white as coral or black as ebony, and whose skin was spotted like a leper's; for this pest was the worst species of that which is known in Europe as the Putrid Fever, and was accompanied by such excruciating pains in the stomach and loins that the patients speedily became collapsed and exhausted.

Many of our strongest, our best, and bravest soldiers were lying there cold and stiff, with glazed eyes, with relaxed jaws, and forms wasted to the mere shadows of what they were. Others were in all the agonies of death, with foam on their lips, their eyes red as blood, their tongues hard and white. Others were trembling as if in ague fits; many were delirious, and sang Highland coronachs, low, sad, and wailing; and some, who imagined themselves at home, were caressing and talking to those relations and lovers their fancy had conjured up. Many more believed themselves engaged, and encouraged each other by slogans and outcries.

“Cairne na' cuimhne!” I heard a M'Farquhar shout with the voice of a stentor; “club your muskets—come on, loiterers! Dirk and claymore is the order!”

“Go, go!” replied another delirious man with scorn; “teach your mother how to make brose! Dost think 'tis the first time I have smelt powder or heard the clash of swords? Go—I am one of the clan Donnoquhy!”

Full of gloom and despondency, the Germans were swearing, while the Frenchmen chatted and sang. What a medley it was! But in some places there were sounds of prayer and lamentation; these were principally among our own soldiers. In a corner, Torquil Gorm, our pipe-major, was praying in touching terms that the blessed *Iosa Criosd, Mhic Daibhi, Mhic Abrahaim*, would have mercy upon his sufferings. In another place, Donald M'Vurich was lamenting over his dead comrade, a M'Intosh, and repeatedly exclaiming—

“Who among the Clanchattan was like thee, O Ronald Glas?

Would to Heaven that I—poor Donald—might have satisfied death by dying in your place!"

These men had only been shepherds at home; yet Donald's grief was worthy of Athens or Sparta. It is not always under the garments of purple and fine linen that we find the noblest hearts.

The genius who presided over this harrowing scene was Doctor Pennicuik, our chirurgeon-general, a kind, good man, and able leech. He was disrobed to his shirt and breeches, with his sleeves rolled up and his hands dyed in blood, for he was bleeding the patients as fast as they were borne in, and the blood was carried away by his assistants in large tin basins. There, too, were the reverend Gideon Geddes and Father Ignatius, both ministering to the bodily and spiritual wants of such as would receive attention at their hands; but they sometimes made mistakes, for our chaplain might approach some red-hot Romanist, while the poor Jesuit applied himself to some sour Presbyterian, by whom he was repulsed with very little ceremony. At last they both fastened upon one old Gaël, who appeared to be nothing in particular, and on being asked what he was, replied in a faint voice—

"One of the Clan Donald."

"But of what persuasion?"

"A musketeer of Culcraigie's company."

This man was elderly, and his hair was white as snow. He was dying, and his son, Eachin M'Donuil, who had recently accompanied me to Rugen, held up his head that he might hear the solemn prayers and exhortations of the two pastors, who required him to forgive all his enemies, that he might die at peace with all mankind. This he avowed himself quite willing to declare, excepting so far as concerned the M'Leods of M'Leod, the destroyers of his race in Eigg; and, at the thought of them, the old man's dying orbs flashed fire.

Then he was told that he must forgive all without exception, or all their exhortations and his repentance were in vain.

"Well," said he, with an effort, as he grasped his son's hand and a vindictive gleam passed over his stern grey eyes; "if it must be so, I forgive the M'Leods, but *remember them, you, my son,*

Eachin—*remember!*” With these words he expired; and Eachin kissed first the cold brow of his father, and then the blade of his dirk.

I thanked Heaven on perceiving Ernestine, not, as in my first terror I had expected, stretched among the females in that portion of the church, which had been screened off for them, but on her knees between the pallets of two soldiers, to whom she was administering something prepared for them by the surgeon. Inspired by a fit of piety, or benevolence, or mercy (which you will), or by that pure and beautiful zeal, which leads the sisters of mercy to visit the abodes of suffering, poverty, and misery, she had stolen to this frightful hospital to minister to the sick. But she, so highly born, so cultivated in mind, and refined in nature, so gentle, so sensitive, and full of emotions of pity, had over-calculated her own strength of purpose, and now trembled at the unexpected and revolting horrors combined in that dismantled and crowded church.

“Ah! Ernestine,” said I, “what frenzy brought you here—and on such an errand? You were never meant for drudgery such as this, and now you have rendered all my care and anxiety vain, perhaps most fatally vain, by running into the jaws of disease and death.”

“Pardon me,” said she, raising her pale face and saddened eyes to mine. “It was a sudden thought—a happy gleam, that a few good deeds done in the name of Gabrielle (for this was her birthday) might please her spirit—dear Philip, that was all—a few good deeds done in the name of our poor Gabrielle, for the good of the suffering and the glory of Heaven.”

“At the risk of your own life, Ernestine!”

“Chide her not, captain,” said the harsh voice of Gideon Geddes; “for in one hour she hath dune mair than ten surgeons. The merciful are blessed, for they shall obtain mercy. But,” he added in a friendly whisper, “take her awa—for this is nae place for dames of high degree.”

“My good child,” said Father Ignatius, with a kind smile on his long and lantern-jawed face, “I love most to see deeds of mercy when they come from a woman’s hand, and brother Geddes hath quoted rightly.”

"Brither Geddes meaneth, that the blessedness of the merciful consisteth in what they receive—not what they *give*," retorted our testy preacher; "for I do not believe that we can be saved by works alone; and, mairower, do not the Gospels say—" he continued, erecting his short punchy figure, and preparing even there to plunge into a controversy, which the doctor at once interrupted by despatching them on separate errands.

"Philip," said Ernestine, in a low voice; "take me away, for the atmosphere of this place is stifling."

I gladly led her out into the purer air of the street, where the noonday sun was shining, and where, overcome by all she had seen and heard, she burst into a flood of tears.

"Ay, Ernestine," said I, as a shot from the enemies' batteries whistled over our heads; "here is much to shock a girl like you: war, pestilence, and famine, are no trifling foes to encounter."

Another shot, a thirty-six pounder, struck a pinnacle of the church and hurled it into the street; for now, taking advantage of our lessened numbers, the Imperialists had pushed their batteries, trenches, and parallels, far round the flank of the Frankendör, and were almost within pistol-shot. In some places we could hear the voices of Carlstein's pioneers, as they laughed and sang at their work behind the ramparts of earth.

By a circuitous route, and through streets the ends of which Leslie had protected by barricades and traverses of earth, and timber, turf, and stone, I conveyed Ernestine back to her pretty mansion-house; and though I gave Phadrig and Gillian stricter orders than before concerning the admission of visitors, I feared much that the effect of her entering such a den of disease as the great church would prove fatal, and my forebodings were but too sadly realised.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE PLAGUE SPOT.

NEXT day I received a slight wound in the left shoulder from the ball of a carbine; for the Imperialists were now close upon the Frankendör, the whole defence of which was still committed to our shattered regiment by Sir Alexander Leslie, who put implicit trust in us. I had it dressed by a passing surgeon, as I had no wish to risk myself near the frightful hospitals; and, on the firing ceasing, I went to visit Ernestine.

I found her in the little boudoir, and there was something about it and her too, that alarmed me; but then, perhaps, I was weak and nervous; provisions were so scarce that, though she knew it not, I had tasted nothing for two days. She was reclining in a large gilded fauteuil of yellow damask, stuffed with down, and her tiny feet rested on a tabourette of the same.

The room was darkened by the blinds being closely drawn; but the windows were open, and through them there swept a warm breeze, that played with the heavy hangings of velvet, and wafted the perfume of flowers from a large stand of green-painted wood bearing three rows of Dresden china vases, each containing the few flowers of the season.

She was dressed in white satin, brocaded with red flowers; it was a dress I had given her; and to please me, doubtless, she had put it on, together with a pair of beautiful pearl bracelets, for which I had given to one of Karl's pistoliers six dollars, without asking him any questions.

"Dear Ernestine, you are unwell!" said I, on perceiving that she made but a languid motion of her hand as I approached her.

"No, no!" she replied; "but the memory of all I saw yesterday affects me still—and these decayed flowers, perhaps—there,

thank you," she added, as I flung the flowers referred to into the street.

She looked very pale, and I thought the tone of her voice was altered.

Next day she was even paler, and her languid air was unmistakeable. The room was shaded as before, and she sat near the half-opened window, to enjoy the cool breeze that swept over the Sound of Rügen. I hoped it was merely the deprivation of many little luxuries with which I had contrived to furnish her, long after every one else in Stralsund had ceased to think of them. Prudentia and her spouse had kindly sent me some of these things; but a few days before I had visited the shop at the corner of the Bourse, and found it closed, with a *red cross* chalked on the door. The plague had been there, and the drivers of the death carts were to call for the dead on their way to the trenches.

Instead of being curled according to the fashion, in little ringlets all round her charming face, Ernestine had her black hair smoothly and plainly braided over her temples; her dress was still the white brocade with the pearl bracelets; but to-day, although her face was paler still, she assured me with a smile, that she was "quite well."

She remained with her left cheek resting upon her hand, and when caressingly I attempted to kiss it, I felt as if an arrow had pierced my heart, on perceiving that which she had been striving to conceal from me—a round hectic mark, about the size of a dollar.

It was the plague spot!

Some frivolous remark, the natural impulse of a toying lover, died away on my lips as I saw this horrible mark, and with agony became convinced that the finger of death had printed it there. I glanced at her face.

It seemed so much paler since yesterday! It was cold, frozen, and sad looking, even when she strove to smile. Its beauty had become severe, and she seemed taller than usual in her long white stomacher. In that darkened room she looked like a white spirit, or a statue of snowy marble. Her eyes had lost their beautiful language. Sadness, intense sadness, alone remained.

"Ah! do not touch me," said she, withdrawing her hand; "leave me, Philip—leave me *now!*"

"Ernestine!" I exclaimed, and passionately clasping her to my breast, burst into tears.

She endeavoured to elude me, and begged, entreated, and implored me to leave her, lest I, too, might perish by her fatal touch; but I wished for nothing more. Yet I hoped she might be saved, and starting from her side, I summoned Gillian M'Bane, and despatched him for Doctor Pennicuik; I then summoned Ernestine's female attendants, who had her placed in bed.

In two hours I saw her again.

She was delirious, and imagined herself with Gabrielle and her father. Her once beautiful eyes had become bloodshot and red as coral; there was a little line of foam round her lips, and spots of purple were on her cheeks and brow.

Oh, the agony of a sight like that! Honest Pennicuik, hurried me roughly but kindly out of her apartment, and, thrusting me into a fauteuil, made me drink a glass or two of his medicated hospital wine.

Let me hurry over the relation and the memory of those sad hours of hopeless sorrow and futile anxiety.

On the second day, the fever and the delirium passed away, and I was permitted to see her; for Father Ignatius, with more than usual gravity on his long and solemn face, came to tell me that she was dying.

Dying! The good man gave me his arm, for I was very weak, and a partial blindness had come over me. I hoped it was the plague, that I might go with Ernestine; but, alas! it was only the result of sheer hunger, grief, and excitement.

I stood by her bedside in that darkened chamber, the features of which are still before me; its atmosphere was close and sickly; there were vials and bottles, cups and cordials, and between the festooned curtains a pale and sickly face, with inflamed eyes and purple spots upon a snowy skin, that contrasted powerfully with two massive braids of sable hair. And this was Ernestine!

Kneeling down by the side of the bed, I stooped my brow upon her thin wan hand, and wept as if my heart would burst. Ernestine also wept, but in silence; tear after tear rolled over

her hollowed cheek, for she was too feeble to raise her head, and we muttered only incoherent sentences of sorrow and endearment—which it were useless to commit to paper; for to some they might seem exaggerated—to others perhaps too cold and passionless; as I can neither impart to them nor to the reader, the agony that thrilled our hearts, though the memory of that keen agony yet lingers in my soul, like an old and painful dream.

In expression her eyes were sad and fixed; there was a smile of ineffable sweetness playing about her thin white lips; but the dew of death was on her brow and about her braided hair. Believing that she was about to rejoin her sister, the poor girl said to me—

“ I have been praying for you, and for myself—thus, like St. Monica, sending my most pious thoughts as harbingers to heaven. I am going to Gabrielle—ah, how she loved me!”

I could only murmur her name; then she put forth her dear lip affectionately for one more kiss. I became bewildered, and an emotion of wild satisfaction stole into my heart.

“ 'Tis the plague—it has seized *me*, too!” I muttered joyfully. “ Dear Ernestine, I will soon follow you!”

The film was again spreading over my eyes, and there was a hissing in my ears; yet I felt the cold hand of Ernestine clasped in mine, and knew that its grasp was relaxing.

Then I heard the voice of honest Father Ignatius saying in my ear, and with a voice rendered husky by emotion—

“ She is dead—God receive her sinless soul! close her eyes, and kiss her, Philip—all is over now.”

At that moment I heard the wheels of the dead cart rattling over the street, and the jangle of its hateful bell.

Of that mournful day, I remember no more!

* * * *

Next day I recovered, as one who awakes from a deep sleep, and all the events of yesterday rushed like a torrent of grief and pain upon my mind. Father Ignatius, who had relapsed into his immobility of aspect and demeanour, knelt at the fauteuil, reading his daily office out of a little brass-bound breviary,

which he closed the moment I moved. I was lying on the floor, with a cloak spread over me.

"Would you like to see her?" he asked, in a voice of kindness.

"Lead me there, if you please."

"Then, I pray you, follow me."

I stood in the chamber of death, and there was in it an awful stillness that deeply impressed me.

She was dead—this being, whom I had loved with my whole heart, and with my whole soul, *was dead!* yet I had neither a prayer nor a tear. I could neither form one, nor yield the other. I was frozen—stunned! She was dead! and these three words seemed written before me every where; there was a horrid stillness in my heart, and in every thing around me. The whole world seemed to be standing still; and what was now my Ernestine?

I looked upon her, but could not realize her death. The dark hair, which she was wont to dress so gracefully, was smoothed in modest braids over her pale and stonelike brow. They were very still—those glossy braids; and not a breath of air disturbed them, though the breeze lifted the leaves of her now neglected flowers. Her birds were chirping near, for their seed-boxes were empty now; the Jesuit observed this, and, notwithstanding all his sternness, even at that dreadful time he filled them, for the old man's heart was a very kind on.

Her eyes—those deep, dark, glorious eyes—were sightless now; turned back within their snow-white lids, from which the long lashes fell upon her marble cheek. Her nose seemed to have become too aquiline, too pointed and thin, for that of Ernestine; and then the lips—those cold, thin, purple lines—were compressed and rigid; but yet some beauty still was lingering there.

On the second day my Ernestine changed; her features became contracted and livid. Oh, my God! It was a mere yellow masque! I shuddered as I spread a veil over her, and could trust myself to gaze no longer.

I remembered that Gabrielle looked like a sleeping angel; but my Ernestine, more beautiful in life, was becoming ghastly and terrible in death.

"Oh, can this indeed be her who loved me so well!" was frequently my mental exclamation.

Oh, for one more glance—one respiration more! But the horrible stillness was unbroken; decay would come, but never again a glance or a smile.

I remembered now the charming delicacy, the fondness and reverence, with which she had arranged poor Gabrielle's remains for the grave, and would permit no other hands than hers to touch them. *Now*, she herself, whose sentiment had been so fine, so delicate, so noble, was but a poor corpse, too; but there was no sisterly hand to smooth *her* tresses, and arrange the ghostly garments of her long repose. She was left completely to strangers and hard-hearted followers of the camp.

I feared I would become mad, and so forget all about the plague and the siege; but I never left her side until the second day, when a tremendous salvo from the camarade battery made my heart leap within me; and then I heard the rattling drum and the yelling bagpipe summoning our soldiers to the walls. A new thought seized me!

I kissed her soft cheek, and that cold lip, whose icy touch sent a thrill of horror and agony to my heart; then, grasping my claymore, I threw myself at the head of my company, and rushed to the last defence of the Frankendör, with a deep and settled resolution to fall—to die!

CHAPTER XLVII.

LAST ASSAULT OF STRALSUND.

I FOUND that a salvo had completely breached the curtain of the bastion at the Frankendör; that the *debris* of fallen masonry, wooden platforms, cannon and their carriages, had half filled up the ditch before the gap; and that a strong column of Imperialists were advancing to a general assault, led by several officers on horseback, one of whom wore that large red plume for which the Count of Carlstein was so remarkable. Another, who was generally by his side, rode a magnificent white horse, and wore a cuirass and helmet which glittered like silver in the sun, being of the most beautiful workmanship; while his scarf, gloves, holsters, and housings, were fringed with the richest bullion.

This cavalier was the great Duke of Friedland himself, and the place where he rode, at the head of that advancing column, was the mark of nearly a thousand muskets; for the Lord Spynie's regiment of Lowland Scots was now brigaded with ours, but both were greatly reduced in number; and a line of hollow-eyed and pale-visaged men they were; yet as desperate as the most resolute valour, goaded by starvation and disease, could make them.

Three strong regiments advanced to the attack;—one was the battalion of Camargo; another was the Spanish *Atcabuzziers* of Coloredo; and in front was the regiment of Merodé, led by six soldiers, bearing on their shoulders a black coffin!

Within that coffin was Merodé, whom De Vart had slain by a mortal wound; but whose dying injunctions were, that, dead or living, he should head the assault of Stralsund. Ruffians though they were, his soldiers had a wild species of love for him; and now sword in hand, and shoulder-high, six of them bore his

coffin towards the breach, the fire from whence, by frequently killing the bearers, threw the dead man heavily on the earth.

“Gentlemen and comrades,” said Sir Donald; “pikemen and musketeers—to your duty, and do it according to your wont! Remember how many generations of our ancestors, all brave men, who loved the battle as a pastime, are this day looking down upon you from the place of the good man’s reward in heaven.”

“Dirk and claymore! dirk and claymore!” cried our men, and the shout was heard above the roar of the musketry.

“Yes!” said Ian emphatically, as he shook his lofty plumes; “in Heaven’s name let it be dirk and claymore! I would rather meet those fellows hand to hand, in the good old Highland fashion, than by bandying bullets from behind a stone-dyke. Let us this day save Stralsund, or perish with her!”

“Better it is to die by musket-shot, than by starvation or the plague,” grumbled Phadrig Mhor.

“Ian,” said I, “you have still something to live for. Remember Moina!”

“True,” said he; “Moina is here—in my eyes and in my heart. My life is hers.”

“Then why throw it heedlessly away? Do you live for her? ‘Tis enough for the wretched to perish.”

He wrung my hand, and we passed to our places.

On this day of carnage and desperation the world was looking as bright as ever. The walls of the old city were smiling in the sunshine, and its ruaggiest glow fell on the ancient church, within the walls of which there was the greatest amount of suffering. Though the season was advanced, the noon was somewhat sultry, and swarms of new-born gnats were wheeling in the sunny air. The young green grass was sprouting above the trenches where the dead were buried; the Sound was like a blue mirror, and clouds of fleecy whiteness flecked the wide azure dome of the sky. All nature looked beautiful, and the glad earth seemed to smile back on the bright sun; but man, in his wickedness, was doing all he could to render that beautiful Earth—a *Hell*!

I had just come from the lifeless Ernestine, and hence, perhaps, this moralizing for a moment; but I was dogged and desperate;

selfishly caring not who fell, or who survived—who might be victorious, or who vanquished. The world and I had no longer any thing in common; and now the uproar and strife that deepened round me as the foe drew near, were a congenial relief to my tortured spirit; for it rose, as it was drawn away from bitter thoughts, and my heart leaped at the rattling musketry, the shrieks, cries, and moans of the wounded, the tumultuous shouts of the combatants as they closed up shoulder to shoulder in the breach, where our Highlanders shot, with rapid and deadly precision, right over the heads of a stand of Spynie's Lowland pikes, whose gallant breasts had replaced the fallen bastion.

On came that triple column of the foe, and now one high discordant yell announced that they were within pistol-shot; but so thick was the smoke before us that we could scarcely see them. The wild Merodeurs made incredible efforts to bring on the coffin of their colonel, and seemed to enjoy the strange bravado of being led by a corpse to the assault; but every relay of soldiers who lifted it from the earth were shot down in succession, until at last the coffin, with its bearers and hundreds of others, tumbled pell-mell into the ditch, before the breach, the way to which became literally choked by the bodies of the killed and wounded; and over these the rear companies of the Merodeurs, and Carmargo's Spanish pikemen, rushed mingling to the assault, like a flood of valour and fury.

But the flood was stemmed, and that fury curbed by the hedge of Scottish pikes that met them in the breach, and the Spaniards and Germans were rolled back on each other, until the front ranks were literally hurled headlong on the rear. In vain, by clubbed muskets, by hewing with swords, and by grasping with the bare hand, they strove to beat, to cut, or tear a passage through the soldiers of Lord Spynie. The finest chivalry of England, of Normandy, and Aquitaine, had failed, on fields of more than European renown, to force a passage through a rampart of Scottish pikes; and now, assuredly, that honour was not reserved for the Imperialists of the Duke of Friedland. Some, however, were torn out of Spynie's ranks, and slain or taken prisoner; among the former was the son of the Laird of Leys,

first private gentleman of a company; and, among the latter, Sir John Hume of Aytoune, in the Merse. He was dragged by the throat and waist-belt into the midst of the enemy, by whom he was barbarously slashed and wounded.

Over the heads of Spynie's men, and closing up into their ranks, our Highland musketeers poured their bullets point-blank into the faces of the stormers; while our brass cannon, from an angle of the bastion, raked their column in flank. Here they slew many of our best men; and Lumsden, my lieutenant, Captain McDonald, of the house of Keppoch, and nearly three hundred gallant clansmen, fell to rise no more. We shot down all the mounted officers, save those two who had been so conspicuous, one by his red plume, the other by his snow-white horse; and, during the lulls of the smoke and uproar, they were to be seen and heard encouraging their soldiers, by precept and example, to push on, and to die rather than flinch.

"That is Rupert-with-the-Red-plume!" I heard Sir Donald say; "and he on the white horse is the Duke of Friedland; for who but he would have the black buffalo's head of Mechlenburg on his saddle-cloth? Fifty Scottish pounds to the man who knocks them both on the head!"

But they seemed to bear charmed lives, and though innumerable shots were fired at them through openings in the smoke, they were never hit; and now, fortunately for us, at the very moment our ammunition was beginning to fail, the enemy began to waver; and at such a time, and on such a duty, to waver is but a prelude to flight. They gave way on all hands, and retired with precipitation round the right flank of the Frankenlake, leaving behind them a terrible scene of carnage and destruction.

The killed lay in hundreds, and the wounded screaming for water, groaning, rolling, and throwing up their hands and feet, lay in hundreds more, among scattered arms, drums, standards; and then the horrors of the fosse, where a seething mass of living and dead lay piled over each other, head and heels, endwise and crosswise, trod upon, and pierced in a thousand places by the storm of shot that had augmented their number every moment, piling up a hecatomb of slain above the abandoned coffin of the once terrible and reckless Merodé! Among their fallen

riders, even in the ditch, as well as on the approach thereto, lay many noble horses, maddened by pain, kicking, plunging, snorting, and shrieking (for a horse, at times, can utter a frightful cry), as they rolled over the helpless wounded, with their iron hoofs breaking legs and ribs, or beating out the brains of those whom the musket-shot had already maimed elsewhere. Use and wont made us regardless of this scene; and now we were sufficiently attracted by another.

While the fugitives were retiring round the angle of the Frankenlake, the two mounted officers already mentioned, were frequently seen endeavouring to rally them, and placing their horses before the flying bands; but they might as well have striven to stay the waves of ocean. At last they appeared to quarrel with each other; we saw their swords gleam as blows were given and thrusts exchanged; their horses reared up, and then plunged past each other; a blade flashed in the sun, and the cavalier on the white horse was struck from his saddle; his charger galloped away, and while he had to limp after his soldiers on foot, the officer with the red plume came galloping madly back towards the breach, waving a white handkerchief to us in sign of truce or peace. Several shots were fired after him by the Merodeurs, but, escaping them, he cleared the corpse-encumbered ditch by one terrific bound, and forcing his noble horse up the rough avalanche of masonry, dismounted in the midst of us, breathless, panting, pale with excitement, anger, and exertion.

“The Count of Carlstein! Rupert-with-the-Red-plume!” cried a hundred voices, in every varying accent of astonishment.

“Ay, gentlemen, your countryman! no longer, I fear, Rupert Count of Carlstein, but simply old Philip Rollo, the soldier of fortune that fate saw him thirty years ago. By one blow of my sword—the same which, not a minute ago, unhorsed that mighty, ambitious, and intolerable tyrant, the Duke of Fried-
land—I have demolished one of the fairest fortunes that ever a stanch soldier secured by the toil and dangers of a life that can never be lived again. Receive me, I pray you, as your countryman, as a poor and penniless soldier, who comes to seek service under the Swede and Dane.”

The count spoke with bitterness, and breathed hard as he leaned on his sword, and our regiment closed round him with surprise and inquiry. Unwilling to tell what I knew would be as poniards in his heart (the fate of Ernestine), I stood a little in the background; while Marshal Leslie, Sir Donald Mackay, and Lord Spynie, all together inquired the cause of quarrel with his general. After taking a sip or two of brandy from the flask of Ian Dhu, and retiring a little apart from the vicinity of the breach—

“ You are well aware, gentlemen,” said he, “ how signal has been the success attending the arms of the emperor and princes of the Catholic League. Driven from Juteland, Christian IV. has been glad to seek shelter by sea, and by wandering among the Danish isles, and the career of conquest has only been stopped by the waters of the Baltic——”

“ And the Scottish infantry,” interposed old Leslie.

“ Yes, marshal, but that I considered as understood. I have long foreseen that this ambition will destroy itself. The combination of the northern kings is what Wallenstein most dreads and hates, as it prevents him obtaining a solid hold upon the Baltic, and from penetrating into Sweden for his own ends, though in the emperor’s name. At a great council of war held lately in Vienna, I threw out some hints of Wallenstein’s hopes of founding a separate power in northern Europe—a power of which himself would be the head. I represented to the emperor the necessity of making peace with Christian IV. before he invaded Sweden, urging that he could never withstand a union of the northern princes with the hostile Protestants of the empire. The emperor was pleased to hearken to me, and, desirous of peace, despatched me to Stralsund here, with written powers to treat with Christian; these powers he afterwards dared to repudiate, and Wallenstein, who—far from wishing a peace, which would reduce him to a mere civilian again—hopes in the general confusion to achieve such ends as no man hath conceived since the days of Alexander of Macedon, dared to destroy my credentials before my face—yea, but yesterday in council! Hence our high words to-day, under the very muzzles of your cannon. When, enraged by the useless slaughter of which he was

the cause, I accused him of daring and criminal ambition, blows were exchanged, and by one I hurled him to the earth, and cut myself off from the empire for ever."

How truly the count had judged of the character of the great Duke of Friedland (or the Archduke of Mechlenburg, as he was generally styled for a time), after events have shown; for they brought to pass that dark scene in the Bohemian Castle of Eagar, where the Scottish colonels, Leslie and Gordon, were compelled to hew off his head in the banqueting hall.

"Ah! here is my friend and namesake, Captain Rollo," said the count, approaching me; "and so, comrade, you have still preserved the gold chain I gave you on that moonlight night by the marshy Elbe. But what is the matter? you look pale as Banquo's ghost. I see starvation in every eye here. Now lead me to my poor girl—the last that fate has left me; for if I have *her* in my arms, the county of Carlstein, the castles of Giezar and Keeningratz, with all my orders of knighthood and nobility, and my colonel-generalship of the Imperial Cavalry, may go to the devil for aught that I care. Ha—what is this?"

He paused, for there was, I knew, a terrible expression in my face; and, unable longer to conceal my emotion, I flung away my sword, muffled my face in my plaid, and burst into tears.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE SUN SHINES AGAIN.

WE entered the room where she lay, and the stillness of death was there. We approached her with reverence; and when I stretched my hand towards the veil that covered her, it was with the air of a monk displaying the sacrament, for the remains of those we love are to us the holiest of all holy things.

“Ernestine—oh, my Ernestine!” sobbed the count. I thought that the veil which shrouded her figure moved.

It was but fancy.

We stood silent, for our hearts swelled with the most intense sadness, and were filled by the memory of the past.

Language cannot portray what the count felt, for the shock was so sudden. Within one hour his pale cheek had sunk; his eyes were inflamed, and his voice trembled. The very profundity of the poor father’s affliction had dried up the ordinary channels of grief, and thus no tear escaped to relieve his agony.

The face of Ernestine had still its unpleasant expression, and yet, amid its awful stillness, I could have sworn a spasm contracted it.

The coffin was preparing; two of Spynie’s soldiers were making it.

For a time the count was like a statue; frozen, impassible. I have said his grief was of that kind which had neither tears nor words. It escaped in deep, dry, agonizing sobs, and he clenched his nether lip with his teeth till the blood came.

“Blessed God, thou triest me sorely! Both are gone! both gone now!—and I am alone in this wide, dreary world again. At my age ‘tis said we cannot weep.”

In brief terms, I informed the count of the relationship between us, and how Ernestine and I had discovered at

Nyeköbing, that he was my long lost uncle, Philip—and she my cousin. He gazed at me as if he thought I raved; then he seemed to be convinced, and then dismissed it from his mind; for surprise, regard, and all minor emotions, had shrunk before the tornado of great and overwhelming grief.

“How long has she been dead?” he asked, in a low and husky voice.

“Since yesterday at noon—yesterday morning, she was alive and spoke to me.”

The tears now burst from the eyes of the old soldier, and, stooping over the body, he embraced and kissed it.

Suddenly he uttered a cry, and turned to me with wildness and astonishment in his eyes.

“She is warm—she lives! Ernestine! Ernestine!”

I sprang to his side, and clasped one of her hands in mine. *It was quite warm!*

There was a convulsive motion in her fingers and feet; she opened her eyes, and a faint sigh escaped her; joy and terror bewildered me for a moment. Then I rushed away in search of a surgeon. Hurrying through the streets bareheaded, and without sword, scarf, or doublet, the first I met was no other than old Pennicuik. He thought me seized by delirium; but accompanied me without delay to the room of Ernestine, who seemed to be again hovering between life and death.

How dimly and confusedly that new day of terror, grief, and joy floats before me! I was like one who suffered from vertigo; I do not think I had the full use of my senses. Pennicuik immediately ordered all the windows to be opened; he took the pillows from under her head; he bathed her temples with Hungary water, *eau de luce*, and warm brandy; he sponged her little hands and snow white arms in vinegar and warm water; and a little wine was gently poured between her lips. Then, after the fashion of the female nurses at the Altenburg hospital, he blew air into her lungs by the nostrils.

In two days she was so fully restored to life as to be able to relate to us all her sensations, some of which were very remarkable.

She had *dreamed* that she was dead, and yet was sensible of

all that passed around her. At times it seemed as if her spirit left her body, and yet remained near it—appearing to hover over that which it had no longer the power to move. When I kissed her, and closed her eyes, she had felt the touch of my hand without having the power of opening her eyes again. The horror of being buried alive occasioned her the utmost agony; and when she heard persons moving about her—when she heard sounds in the street, especially the jangle of the death-cart bell, her *unexpressed* agitation was terrible; but her soul could no longer act upon her fettered tongue, and she felt icy cold. Hence those spasmotic contractions of feature which I had actually seen, but thought were the result of my own disturbed fancy. The approach of her father, and the sound of his voice, gave a new impulse to her almost prostrate mind; it resumed its wonted power over her weakened organisation, and produced the sudden warmth which had startled him, when he thought he was embracing her for the last time.

Language has no power to describe the joy of such a restoration, as it seemed, from the very jaws of the grave; but it formed the subject of two sermons—one preached by Father Ignatius, and the other by the reverend Gideon Geddes, who construed the affair very differently; for the Jesuit affirmed that she had been restored to life by virtue of certain blessed reliques which he had cunningly slipped below her pillow; while the Presbyterian declared that she had merely been restored to existence, that she might live to see the errors of popery and its ways; and if the reader partake my joy and satisfaction, he or she will pardon my having kept them behind the curtain for a single chapter.

Little more remains to be told.

Rendered desperate by the successive defeats he had sustained since the battle of Lütter, Christian IV. was compelled, at the conference of Lubeck in 1629, to accede to the terms of a treaty of peace offered by the great Duke of Friedland, who then restored to Denmark all that he and Tilly had taken beyond the Elbe; and the siege of Gluckstadt, which had been so valiantly defended by the Scottish cavaliers of Sir David Drummond, was raised. The conditions imposed upon Christian were, that he should no more interfere in the German affairs than he was

entitled to do as Count of Holstein; that on no pretext was he to enter the circles of Lower Germany; that he was to leave the weak and timid family of the palatine to its fate; and that the Scottish troops in his service were to quit it forthwith.

Thus, by a strange combination of misfortunes, was the most gallant of the Danish monarchs compelled to retire ingloriously from the great arena of the German war.

After thanking us for our services, he bade us adieu, and I saw the tears glisten in the only eye that war had left him. He sailed—not to rejoin his queen, who always met him with coldness in his reverses—but to seek the society and solace of the fair Countess of Fehmarn, his wife of the left-hand; who, whether in victory or defeat, had ever welcomed him with joy, gratitude, and love.

Repulsed, as related, in his last attempt to obtain Stralsund by assault, the great and ambitious Duke Albrecht, after a four months' siege, in which he lost upwards of twelve thousand of his best and bravest soldiers, was compelled to spike his cannon, burn his camp, destroy his baggage, and retreat into Saxony, thus acknowledging that neither his skill nor his mighty host had availed him before the valour of Marshal Leslie's Scottish garrison.

The plague passed away with him, and health, happiness, (and fresh provisions,) all flowed together into Stralsund. The good and industrious citizens resumed their wonted occupations; and, so sensible were they of the protection our swords had afforded, that they made old Field-marshall Leslie a magnificent present of silver-plate, and ordered medals* to be struck in honour of the Scottish troops.

It was arranged that the Highland regiment of Strathnaver, then reduced to about four hundred men, should enter the Swedish service with Sir Alexander Leslie, and that all the Scottish and French volunteers who served King Christian, should accompany them; but as Ian Dhu and I had seen enough of the German wars to enable us to acquit ourselves in Scottish society at home; and, moreover, as a cloud was darken-

* Some of these are still (I believe) in possession of the Leven family.

ing in the political horizon of the north, we took a sad farewell of the brave fellows we had led in so many arduous encounters, and prepared to return to our native glens. The count prepared to accompany us.

"I am now sick of war," said he; "and, as King Jamie said of old, have a salmon-like instinct to revisit the place of my nativity."

Aware that reverses of fortune might one day come upon him, and that his estates of Carlstein, Giezar, and Kœnigratz in Bohemia, were perhaps little better than so many castles in the air, the count, like a wary old soldier, had gradually secured vast sums in the hands of those famous and wealthy merchants, Thomas Watson of Leith, and Herr Dübbelstein of Glückstadt. Thus he was as independent of the family at Craigollo as I; for, on my marriage with Ernestine (which we had arranged should take place in the old kirk of St. Regulus at home), I would receive a handsome share of the count's prize-money, which would form a very reputable estate, the more so if we could secure the two baronies of poor Kœnigheim; but I feared *that* would be no easy matter, as various real or imaginary relations had already possessed themselves of all his towers and places of strength.

However, we fully hoped to be able to give direct contradiction to the old prophecy anent the family heirloom, and the absurd assertion that never a Rollo thrrove in this world if his mouth was unable to receive its mighty disc.

I shall never forget the day on which we marched from Stralsund; for we all embarked together. My dear comrades to enter on the long and glorious career of the new German war; Ernestine, the count, Ian, and myself, with Phadrig Mhor, to return to old Scotland; for Ian was to be married to his Moina, and Phadrig remembered that there was a lint-locked lassie in Strathdee, who would be very well pleased if again he came back to her and the green forests of Braemar.

Ernestine had fully recovered, and had become more beautiful and radiant than ever.

She wept when honest Father Ignatius lifted up his long bony hands and blessed her, before departing, staff in hand, as he

said, “like St. Argobastus the Scot,” on his lonely pilgrimage after the Imperial host.

The Swedish fleet lay at anchor in the Sound to receive the regiment, which my heart bled to leave.

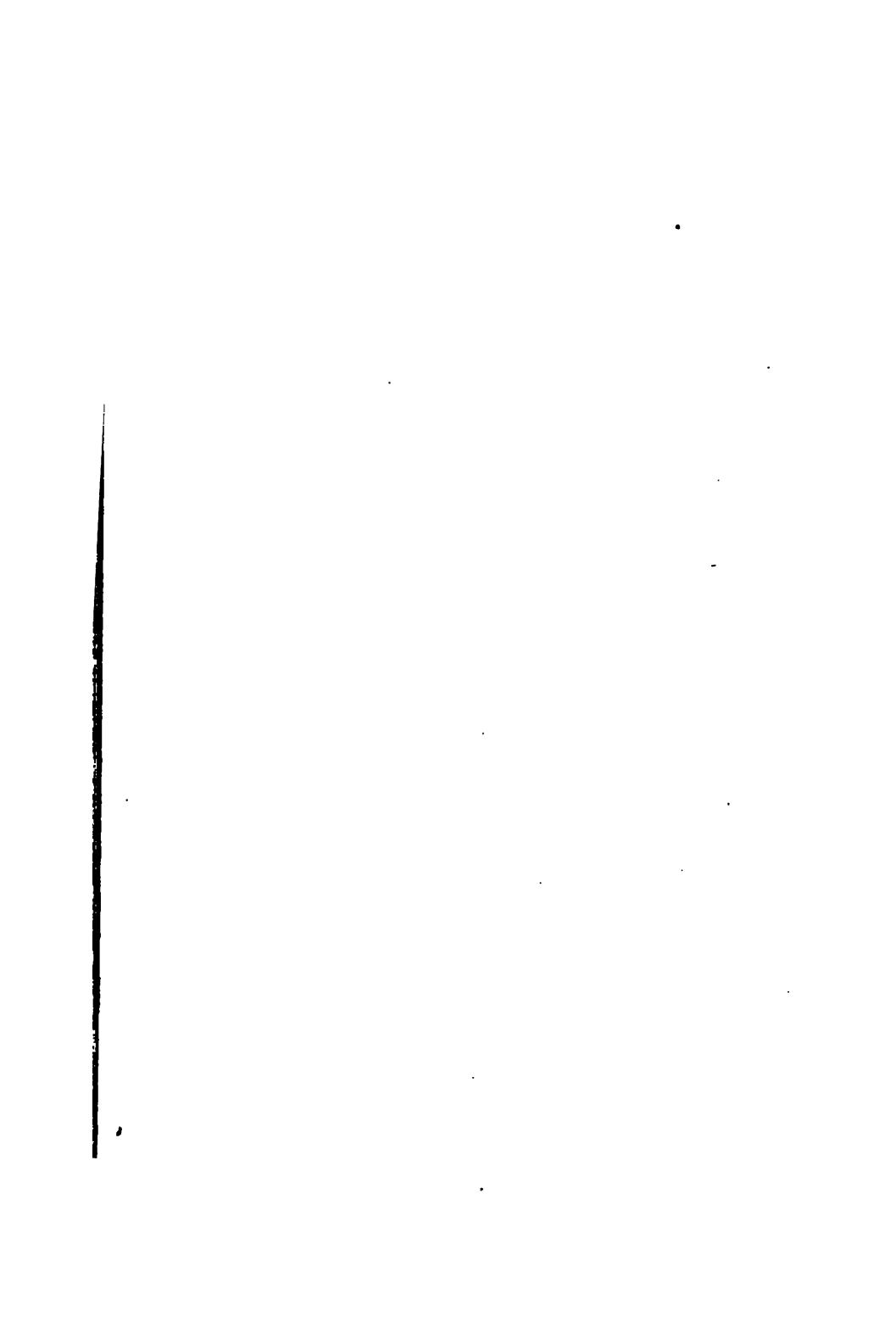
The good ship *Scottish Crown*, with all her sails loose, and a spring upon her cable, waited to receive us.

On one side lay the deserted trenches and dismantled batteries of the discomfited Wallenstein; here lay a brass cannon with the moss upon its muzzle; there a mound, where the fresh grass sprouted above the calm repose of the dead, and the autumn flowers expanded in the morning sunshine.

On the other side rose busy Stralsund, its shining walls decorated by silken banners, and its church-bells tolling merrily; for now, war, disease, and desolation, had passed away together.

Between, lay the blue waters of the narrow Sound, where the white sails of the Scottish and Swedish ships were flapping in the morning wind.

By the round archway, by the stony streets, and the frowning bastions, our hoarse drums beat merrily, and the shrill fife, with the proud war-pipe of the Gaël, rang upon the breeze; the green tartan waved, and the silken banners with the Red Lion and the Silver Cross rustled above our heads. All our hearts beat high with hope and ardour; and yet it was not without a sigh of regret for the brave Scottish hearts that had grown cold for ever beneath Jaromar’s walls, that we marched down to the crowded and sunny beach for embarkation.



NOTE S.

THE SCOTS IN DENMARK.

SOME account of the Scottish troops who went to Denmark about 1625, will be found in the "Memoirs of Sir John Hepburn," recently published by the author of this work. They appear to have mustered as follows:—

	Men.
The regiment of Sir Donald Mackay of Farr	1500
Colonel Sir James Leslie's regiment	1000
Alexander Seaton's	500
The regiment of the Earl of Nithsdale, three Battts.	3000
The regiment of Alexander Lord Spynie, three Battts.	3000
The regiment of Sir James Sinclair of Murkle, ditto.....	3000

These 12,000 men were independent of 3000 sent by Scotland to the Isle Rhé, and about 13,000 more who entered the service of Gustavus Adolphus, while at the same time many of the Scottish Catholics flocked to the standard of the Emperor Ferdinand II.

THE SCOTTISH FLAG.

"The regiment received colors," says Colonel Munro, "wheron His Majestie (Christian IV.) would have the officers to carry the Danes Crosse, which the officers refusing, they were summoned to compeare before his Majestie at Raynesberge, to know the reason of their refusall—and for the eschewing of greater inconveniente, the officers desired so much time of his Majestie, as to send Captaine Robert Ennis into England, to know his Majestie of Great Britaine's will, whether or no they might carrie without reproach the Danish crosse in *Scottish Colors*." Answer was returned, that they should obey the orders of him they served.—See Munro's *Expedition with Mackay's Regiment*. Published 1637.

THE HIGHLAND PURSE.

Macnab, of Macnab, presented to the Scottish Antiquaries, in 1783, a Highland-purse clasp, exactly similar to that described as being worn by Philip Rollo. This suggested to Scott a similar clasp for guarding the sporran of Rob Roy, who said to Bailie Jarvie, "I would advise no man to attempt opening this sporran till he has my secret."

The story of the Lily of Culbleine is an ancient Scottish tradition: her grave is still shown in her native parish; and many of the characters mentioned in the foregoing pages were all persons who really existed at the time. I may particularly instance Dr. Pennicuik of Newhall and that Ilk, an account of whom will be found in the *Scots Magazine* for 1805. Other names, such as Sir Alexander Leslie's, belong to the history of Scotland, and require no comment. Bandolo is also a real character; and his double assassinations at Naples are veritable history.

THE ROLLO SPOON.

The idea of this quaint heirloom is taken from a similar one preserved by the ancient family of Crauford of Cowdenhill. It is of silver, measuring three inches wide in the mouth, and inscribed—

*"This spoon I leave in legacie,
To the maist mouthed Crauford after me."*

1480."

MACKAY'S OFFICERS.

Some idea of the service seen by the regiment of Strathnaver, may be gathered from the following list of its officers, who were wounded or lost their lives in the service of Christian IV. of Denmark, between August 1626, and August 1629. It is made up from Munro, and others.

Colonel Sir Donald Mackay, Bart., scorched by powder at the defence of Oldenburg.

Lieutenant-Colonels Seaton, and Arthur Forbes, wounded at Oldenburg.

Major Dumber, slain defending Boitzenburg.

Captain Boewal, slain by the boors in Bremen.

- „ John Learmonth of Balcomie, wounded twice by musket-balls at Boitzenburg, and died in consequence at Hamburg.
- „ Sir Patrick M'Gie received a wound at Oldenburg, of which he died at Copenhagen.
- „ John Forbes of Tulloch, wounded at Oldenburg.
- „ Robert Munro, wounded in the knee at Oldenburg.
- „ Duncan Forbes, killed at Bredenburg.
- „ —— Carmichael, killed at Bredenburg.
- „ Thomas Mackenzie of Kildon (Lord Seaforth's brother), wounded in the legs at Eckernförde.
- „ —— Armis, wounded at the siege of Stralsund.
- „ Andrew Munro, also wounded there; and afterwards slain in single combat by the Count of Rantzau, in the Isle of Fehmarn.

Captain Lieutenant Kerr, wounded in an arm at Eckernförde.

Lieutenant David Martin, killed at Boitzenburg.

- „ Hugh Ross, lost a leg by a cannon-shot at Oldenburg.
- „ Andrew Stewart (brother of John, first Earl of Traquair) received a wound at Oldenburg, and died of it at Copenhagen.
- „ — Barbour, killed at Bredenburg.
- „ David Munro, scorched by powder when blowing up the church at Eckernföerde.
- „ — Beaton, wounded at Stralsund.
- „ Arthur Arbuthnot, also wounded there.

Ensign Innes, wounded at Oldenburg, and slain at Stralsund.

- „ Seaton, wounded at Oldenburg, and slain at Stralsund.
- „ Stewart, wounded at Oldenburg.
- „ Gordon, wounded at Oldenburg.
- „ David Munro, wounded at Oldenburg.
- „ Patrick Dunbar, wounded at Stralsund.

Quarter-master Bruntisfield, wounded at Stralsund, where 500 of the Highlanders were killed.

Chaplain, killed at Bredenburg.

The regiment had more than 30 officers killed and wounded in three years; and lost more than 1000 privates in the same short space of time.

THE END.

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